

HOW TO LOSE INDIA?

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BY

C. S. RANGA IYER

*Author of "Father India," "India in the Crucible"
and "India—Peace or War?"*

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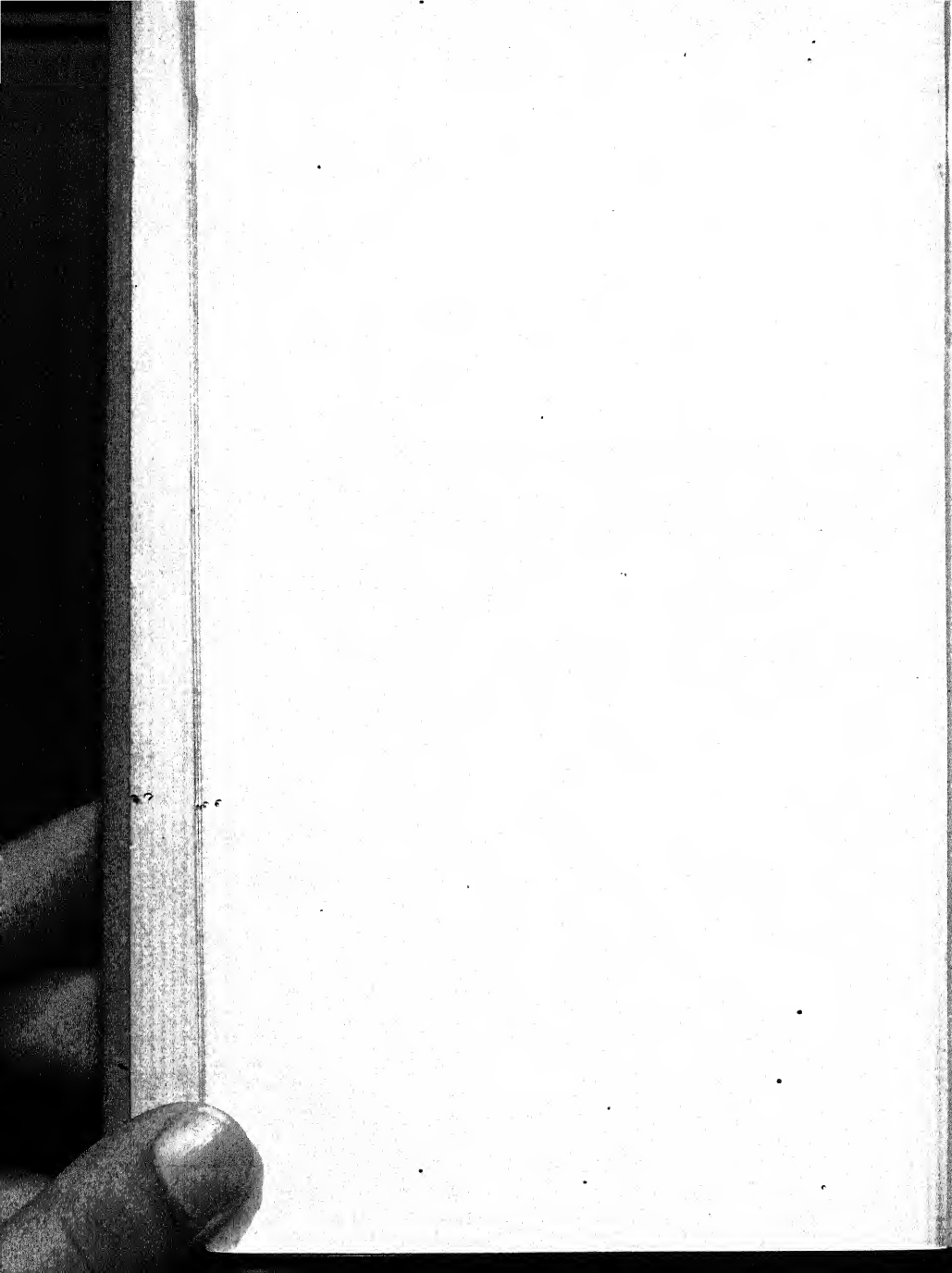
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"It is my considered judgment that you have a good chance of keeping India in the Empire for ever. I say deliberately that if you refuse the opportunity you will infallibly lose India before two generations have passed."

—RT. HON. STANLEY BALDWIN (at the Conservative Party's Special Meeting on December 4, 1934.)



PUBLISHERS' PREFACE.

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer, author of *Father India* (Selwyn and Blount, London) which went into thirteen editions in one year and was a best seller, has in his present book, *How to Lose India*, brought the story of the Indian reforms to its conclusion. In *India in the Crucible* he took up the reforms as they actually were in the melting pot as revealed by the voluminous publication of the correspondence between the Government of India and the Provincial Governments on the working of dyarchy. In *India: Peace or War?* (Harraps, London) Mr. Ranga Iyer brought the story up to the date of the declaration of Dominion Status by Lord Irwin. In *How to Lose India*, he begins where *India: Peace or War* ended. He dwells upon a controversy which has created much fervour on both sides of the ocean.

How to Lose India consists of three parts. The First Part deals with the achievements and failures of the Socialist Government in their handling of the Indian problem. In the Second Part of the book, the author dwells upon the New Dispensation, the Congress and the Future, a Constituent Assembly, Communal Award and other matters of current interest. The Chapter "From Gandhi to Hitler" removes the veil which hides the future. A Chapter on "Mahatma Gandhi and Lord Willingdon" reveals the first talk between the two personalities on Satyagraha. "In

Part III of *How to Lose India*, the author reviews the Swarajist Revolt in the Assembly, the Congress views on the Reforms, the White Paper and the Joint Committee Report. The author concludes by supplying the connecting links between Lord Willingdon's letters to Mr. Lloyd George and the Joint Committee Report.

A member of the Legislative Assembly for a period of eleven years without interruption, the author has given much thought to the problem of Indian constitutional reforms. As an old Congressman his interest in them is older than the Montagu reforms. He deals with the past with easy familiarity. The present interests him more than the past. The things of the future, to him, rest not on the knees of the gods but the pages of *How to Lose India*.

January 1935.

CONTENTS

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
PUBLISHER'S PREFACE	vii
INTRODUCTORY	xi
PART I	
I WITH TWO VOICES	17
II THE TIGER AND THE ELEPHANT	30
III CRUSADE AGAINST GANDHI	32
IV IRELAND—AND INDIA	38
V A CANDID OUTBURST	54
VI THE EDUCATED AGITATOR	68
VII REPRESSION	87
VIII AN IMPERIAL SENTINEL	97
IX HOW TO SAVE INDIA	III
PART II	
XX THE NEW DISPENSATION	118
XXI THE CONGRESS—THE FUTURE	124
XXII CHURCHILL—AND SAWARAJISTS	135
XXIII M. GANDHI AND LORD WILLINGDON	147
XXIV A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY	157
XXV THE BRITISH CONNEXION	165
XXVI PUNDITJI AND A RED HERRING	174
XXVII FROM GANDHI TO HITLER	185
XXVIII INDOPHOBES AT BRISTOL ANSWERED	206
XXIX AFTER BRISTOL	213
XXX DUAL POLICIES AND PERSONALITIES	233
PART III	
XXXI CONGRESS VIEW OF THE NEW REFORMS	248
XXXII. CONGRESS REVOLT IN THE ASSEMBLY	274
XXXIII ONE BLUNDER AFTER ANOTHER	313

CONTENTS

XXXIV	JOINT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE REPORT AND COLONIAL EXPERIENCE	342
XXXV	CONCLUSION: LORD WILLINGDON AND INDIAN REFORMS	369
	EPILOGUE	409

INTRODUCTORY

"He cannot 'scape their censures, who delight
To misapply whatever he shall write."

MASSINGER—*Emperor of East.*

"For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight
He can't be wrong whose life is in the right."

POPE—*Essay on Man.*

This book begins with the constitutional stage that followed the first Civil Disobedience movement when Extremists and Moderates alike demanded a Round Table Conference to settle the Indian problem of Dominion Status. It is rather strange that the Archbishop of Canterbury should have justified the omission from the Joint Committee Report of the Viceregal declaration, in his speech in the House of Lords. It is even more strange that Lord Halifax does not see eye to eye with the late lamented Lord Irwin! Did Lord Halifax become cautious after Mr. Churchill's row in the Joint Committee before which he appeared as a witness? Lord Halifax reminded Mr. Winston Churchill of an identical outburst of his when he was a member of the Cabinet. That erratic genius smartly confessed that he had committed a "mistake"! Does Lord Halifax too think his Indian pronouncement was a "mistake"? Why then has he not stood by it and fought for it, as he was inclined to do, when Lords Birkenhead and Reading asked for his Viceregal head on a charger? It was the declaration of Dominion Status which sent a thrill of hope throughout India. The Round Table Conference

was summoned to give effect to that declaration. The Joint Committee Report which has completed the labours of the Round Table Conference not only makes no reference to Dominion Status but avoids that phrase like poison! It takes as the basis of the new Constitution Act the old Montagu announcement.

In omitting all reference to Dominion Status, the Joint Committee have followed the Simon Report, the least line of resistance. The Joint Committee, however, should not have ignored the fact that the Round Table Conference included not only delegates from British India but also the Indian States. The latter did not come under the purview either of the Simon Commission or of the Montagu announcement. The Irwin *pledge* of Dominion Status itself was given when the vision of a Greater India floated before the imagination of our Princes and People. The Indian Delegates to the Joint Committee have stated clearly in their Memorandum that "Indian public opinion has been profoundly disturbed by the attempts made during the last two or three years to qualify the repeated pledges given by responsible Ministers on behalf of His Majesty's Government. Since it is apparently contended that only a definite statement in an Act of Parliament would be binding on future Parliaments and that even the solemn declaration made by His Majesty the King-Emperor on a formal occasion is not authoritative, we feel that a declaration in the preamble is essential in order to remove present grave misgivings and avoid future misunderstandings."

In vain did the Labour Members remind their colleagues in the Joint Committee of this passage in Indian Delegates' Memorandum. In vain did they protest against the omission of the objective of the Constitution which, in their language, is "nothing less

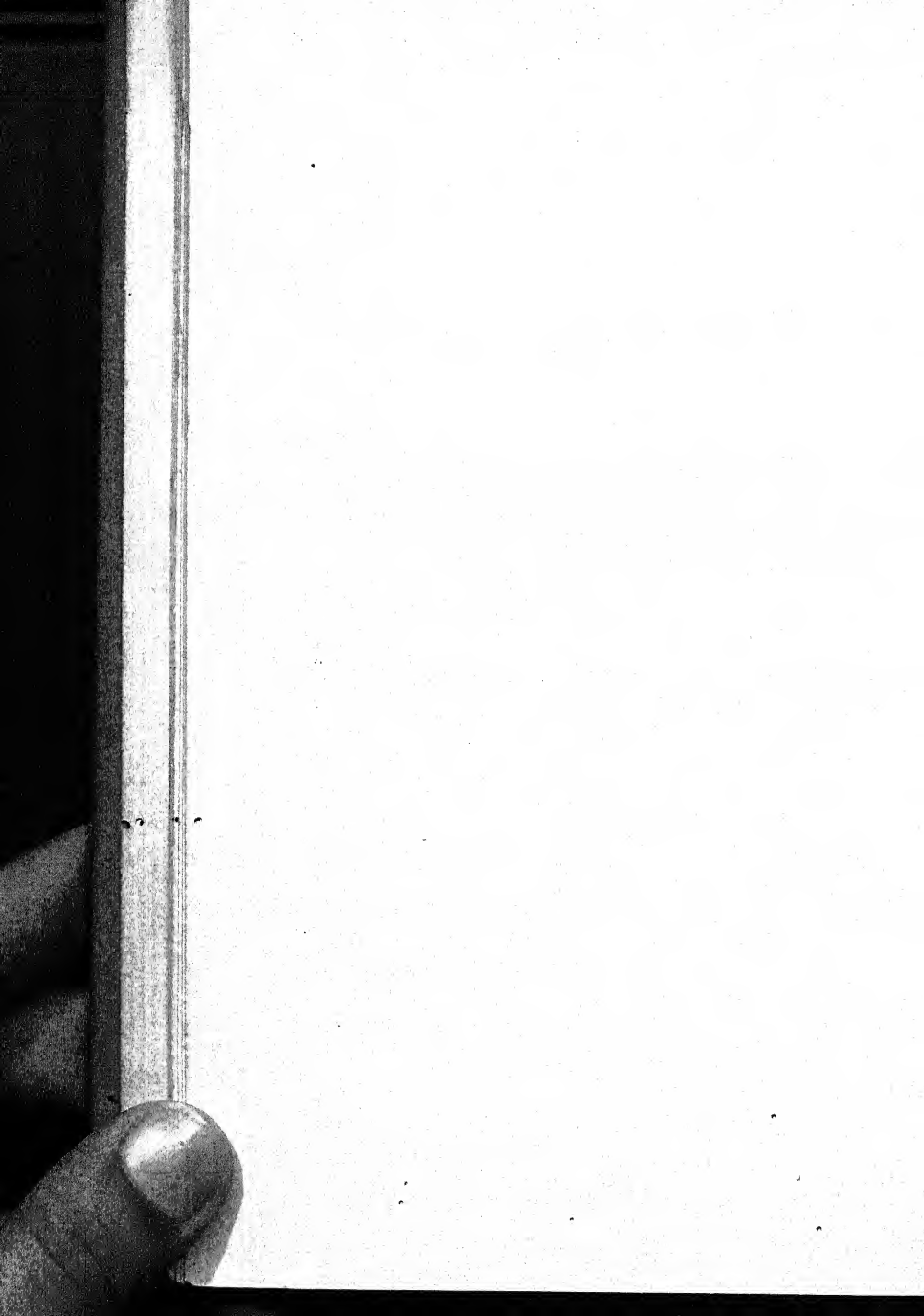
than Dominion Status." The Labour members were "insistent on this point, because evidence has been put before us, with which we wish to record our entire disagreement, which purported to show that Dominion Status, with all its implications, never formed the subject of any pledge to India." The Joint Committee were thinking more of England when they evaded the pledge than of India.

Turning to the Indian picture, one finds that even though the Congress had lost the main battle, it has won the General Election. It retains the power to hate and hit. Its No-changers who find that Civil Disobedience is overruled by a determined Viceroy, have sent their emissaries to His Excellency's legislative out-house. They come resolved to protest:

"Let Hercules himself do what he may,
The cat will mew and the dog will have his day."

What honest people dread is a cat and dog fight. Communalists must behave! How will the Congress fare in the bigger fray? What role will the Government play? Officialdom, no longer up against Civil Disobedience, will bear with patience even when the Opposition push without prudence. This much the new Home Member has not indiscreetly revealed at a Lahore farewell dinner. Meantime, the Mahatma plies the eternal Charka, the Wheel of Destiny, the music of which must affect the course of friend and foe in the Assembly. For as Sir Henry Craik meant it and nearly said it, in his post-prandial speech:—

"There is so much good in the worst of us,
And so much bad in the best of us,
That ill-behoves any one of us,
To find any fault with the rest of us."



PART I



CHAPTER I

WITH TWO VOICES !

" The voice grew faint: there came a further change "

" The Vision of Sin "

—Tennyson.

The Right Honourable Wedgwood Benn spoke with pardonable pride in the Mother of Parliaments that he was determined to revive the Montagu spirit.¹ He spoke with that feeling which comes from sincerity. His was a first class debating speech.

Earlier in the debate Mr. Lloyd George had denounced Mr. Benn and an enthusiastic colleague of his in the Cabinet, Mr. Lansbury for issuing a 'shout of joy ;' for 'dancing before the Ark.' The Welsh wizard was particularly furious with his quondam associate. Mr. Benn was a Liberal once but is now a Socialist.

Men have a right to change. The nochangers were not a class of whom Lloyd George of old was fond. He had a contempt for them as those who remember his Lime House speeches know. He once ridiculed a stickler for consistency as a "stick in the mud."

That day—when the fateful debate took place in the Commons and when the Prime Minister of a Coalition Government—which had endorsed the Montagu pledge—let himself go—the fates had conspired against India.

Lord Reading—who should have known better—had opened the ball in the House of Lords two days

1. *Hansard*: 7th November 1929: pp. 1326 and 1327.

earlier. He had reproached his successor to the great office of Indian Viceroyalty for having proclaimed in a special *Gazette of India Extra-ordinary* on behalf of His Majesty's Government that Dominion Status was Britain's pledge to India—a pledge implicit and explicit in the Montagu Declaration of an earlier date¹. Lord Reading's complaint was that Lord Irwin had no business to put his own interpretation on the Montagu pledge.

Mr. Lloyd George mocked the Secretary of State for India playing the part of a new Messiah—"this pocket edition of Mosses"² "But I never worshipped the Golden Calf," retorted Mr. Benn. Mr. Lloyd George returned with withering scorn: "The Right Honorable gentleman has shown a very shrewd appreciation of what is known as the main chance; and the Calf which has been sacrificed for him has its golden side." Later in the debate, Mr. Benn described Mr. Lloyd George's speech as "most lamentable and mischievous." The sum and substance of Mr. Benn's elocution was that he stood by the Conservative Viceroy who had pledged Dominion Status to India on behalf of His Majesty's Government.

The speech did not clear the doubts and suspicions of the Liberal Leader who interrupted and enquired whether the Secretary of State for India had accepted the interpretation of the Indian Nationalist leaders on the Viceroy's "manifesto"—a rather satirical but very Lloyd Georgian description of a solemn Viceregal proclamation. Mr. Benn replied: "the declaration of the Viceroy stands as it stands." The Secretary of State for India warned his erstwhile chief not to cross-question him "with a view to making difficulties" in India.

1. Parliamentary Declaration of 1917 by Edwin Samuel Montagu, Secretary of State for India.

2. Hansard. 7th November 1929. p. 1321.

This observation was the occasion for an uproar on the opposition benches.

Mr. Baldwin sat calmly enjoying the fun but Mr. Winston Churchill who was shaking with emotion joined in the howl. Mr. Lloyd George rose again to interrupt amidst Conservative and Liberal cheers, Mr. Benn who was in possession of the House gave way. What followed may be recorded in the language of the official report :

Mr. Lloyd George: The right hon. Gentleman has no right to say that. I was responsible, as head of the Government, for these reforms and for this pledge, and I have as deep a sense of responsibility as he has, and I think I am as patriotic as he is. I am asking this question in order to avoid difficulties, and as the right hon. Gentleman knows, in private —[An Hon. MEMBER: "Nobody believes it!"]—I take no notice of that interruption. In private, for the last several weeks before it ever came to this House, I have been urging these matters, when I thought they would never be a subject of public discussion, and in order to avoid the difficulties which will undoubtedly arise if this interpretation is accepted in India without a single word of repudiation. I am asking the right hon. Gentleman now whether he accepts this very grave interpretation in a formal document, a formal considered document, by the Indian leaders in regard to this Conference.

Mr. Benn: I should not have said that the right hon. Gentleman was cross-examining me in order to make difficulties, and I apologise to him. I should not have said that. I should have said that the question he was asking might make difficulties, and the answer to him is this. There is the statement. It is explicit and clear. Nothing has to be added and

nothing has to be taken from it. [Hon. Members : "Answer!"] I have nothing to add.

Mr. Lloyd George : If it were clear, it would be clear to these extraordinarily able men who are the Indian leaders. They are all very able. They are asking, and they say at the end—they have practically asked whether they are right in their interpretation. They are practically asking it, and it is perfectly evident that it is not clear to them, because there is one interpretation that has been put here and there is another interpretation that has been placed upon it in India, and the interpretation placed upon it in India is far more important, if I may say so.

Mr. Benn : I have nothing to add, not one single word, to the answer I have given. The Viceroy's statement was very carefully drafted. It has been approved and it is published. I have made it perfectly clear to-day that both in respect of the declaration and of the conference it stands as it stands, and no questions of the right hon. Gentleman will lead me to add one word or take one word away, and I must beg him to regard that as my final answer.

Sir William Davison : Does the right hon. Gentleman agree with what Lord Passfield said ?

Mr. Benn : I will say no more. I had some other remarks of a general kind to make, but I do not think I can make them, because I do not know that I can succeed, after the cross-questioning that has gone on, in doing what it is my main purpose to do, and that is to justify and explain what the Government thought it their duty to do and to do it in such a way as would not cause any misunderstanding or produce an atmosphere which would place difficulties in the way. I will simply say this, that the problems that face us are very grave. The right hon. Gentleman has

spoken of the gravity of the task that lies ahead. There are obstacles in the path, but there are two ways of regarding obstacles. You can regard them as an excuse for abandoning a pre-determined purpose, or you can regard them as merely exciting a *desire to overcome* them. (*Italics are ours*).

Instead of overcoming the obstacles however the obstacles appear to have overwhelmed the Secretary for India on the one side and the Indian leaders on the other. The voice that spoke in the House of Commons from the Government benches grew fainter. When Mr. Benn addressed the same House a few days later, it seemed as if it was not Mr. Wedgwood Benn of over a month ago who was speaking: it was a gramophone of Mr. Lloyd George! This might seem a rather harsh thing to say. Mr. Benn had quickly learned his lessons in Imperialism. He more correctly resumed his Liberal Imperialism. Between the 7th November 1929 and the 18th December, the lion of war had become a dove of peace.

It was fortunate for the Liberals and the Conservatives who are frankly, loudly and uncompromisingly opposed to Indian Home Rule that a Labour back-bencher should have initiated a second Indian debate. If the India Office desired to change the first performance of its Chief, they could not have hit upon a cleverer plan. A Socialist back-bencher—full of enthusiasm for India—became the spokesman of the India Office not by design but by an accident of the ballot. His resolution was something in the nature of a love lyric. It told the Indian people, "you have become—at any rate you are fast becoming good boys. We at this end surely are pleased with your behaviour." That resolution was moved by Mr. Fenner Brockway whose only qualification to speak for

India was that he had the privilege of corresponding with Gandhi. That resolution could have been as facily moved by a Conservative. As the resolution was moved by the Socialist M. P. the Conservative spokesman contented himself with warmly endorsing the Socialist congratulations on India for her showing signs of good behaviour. Mr. Benn himself was pleased to say that Dominion-Status-in-action was already in existence in India! He further declared "Dominion Status had already become part and parcel of the Government of India"¹ And when pray did this miracle take place? "In 1919 at the signing of the treaty of Versailles," vouchsafed Mr. Benn, when, "India became a separate entity and an orginal member of the League of Nations." This is, of course, the most effective way of belittling India's serious claim to Dominion Status.

If Dominion Status had become in 1919 part and parcel of Indian Government, where was the necessity for the Viceroy to make a new pledge of Dominion Status, in 1929? Where again was the necessity for Lord Reading—who, even on his retirement, appears to feel the burden of Viceregal responsibility on his shoulders!—to address an extraordinary communication to His Majesty's Secretary of State for India, on the eve of the Viceregal proclamation of Dominion Status as "the natural issue" arising from the Montagu Reforms?

Lord Reading's letter which was written on October 27, 1929 has been immortalized by his lordship himself by reading it out to the House of Lords on 5th November 1920 when he tabled a censure motion on the Socialist Government's Indian policy and the Conservative Viceroy's Dominion Status

1. *Hansard*. Wednesday, December 18.

declaration. Lord Reading, who had apparently been taken by the Viceroy on leave and the Socialist Secretary of State for India into confidence, long before the Viceregal proclamation saw the light of day, had objected to it :

The selection of that particular moment immediately after the return of the Viceroy from consultation with the Secretary of State for India and His Majesty's Government and when the Simon Commission was engaged in considering its Report, would lead Indians to the conclusion that the declaration imported a change of policy and brought the final stage of the constitutional development appreciably nearer in point of time.

"I am aware," wrote Lord Reading to Mr. Benn, "*that both you and Lord Irwin maintain that the policy remains unchanged* and that the pronouncement is made merely for the purpose of setting at rest doubts which have arisen in the minds of Indian politicians regarding the meaning of 'responsible government' and the ultimate destiny of India within the Empire. I cannot but think that Indian politicians will believe that the making of the declaration now and without waiting for the Report of the Simon Commission is evidence of a new policy.

"In order to obviate misconception and misinterpretation, may I once more urge that a clear and explicit statement should be made in the pronouncement to the effect that the conditions and reservations in the Declaration of 1917 and the Preamble to the Government of India Act, 1919, continue in their full force. Failing a precise and unequivocal statement of this character, I am convinced that misunderstanding will arise sooner or later in India

and all experience shows that this danger should be most carefully avoided.

"The effect in this country must, I fear, inevitably lead to a serious political controversy which all Parties have desired to exclude in relation to the constitutional position of India. The appointment of the Simon Commission and the selection of its members from the three political Parties with the assent of Parliament led to a general understanding that all questions relating to the constitutional development of India should be postponed until the Commission presented its Report. For the course you are now proposing to take, you have failed to obtain the support of the Liberal Party and, I have reason to believe, of the Conservative Party. So far as I am aware, the Simon Commission has not given its assent. Nevertheless it is intended, as I gather, to proceed immediately and to make the declaration which must be regarded as of capital importance, otherwise it seems inconceivable that Government should persist in the face of the opposition it has met.

"Whatever may be the effect of the Government action in India, *there can be no doubt that in this country and in Parliament there will be an end of the general understanding above mentioned.*" (The italics are ours).

Mr. Wedgwood Benn had claimed in his speech on 7th November 1929 in the Commons that there had been a change in Britain's attitude towards India. On 18th December he denied that any change had taken place! We have already stated that the Socialist Secretary was learning his lessons in Imperialism which his party out of office is never tired of running down.

It might have sounded incredible that a responsible Minister of His Majesty who had boasted that really and truly there was a change—when Mr. Lloyd George heckled him and asked if any change had taken place in regard to the Indian policy of the present Government as distinct from that of its predecessors,—should in less than six weeks have declared that there was no change. To say and straight unsay is the way of Diplomacy. The incredible therefore was bound to take place thanks to Whitehall's traditions. The Socialists, it was evident, had withdrawn from their Indian policy under pressure of the Tory *cum* Liberal Opposition.

The rapidity of the change that swept over Socialism in Whitehall may be recorded in the two voices with which the Secretary of State for India spoke on one and the same subject.

Mr. Benn said once on 7th November 1929:—"HON. GENTLEMEN SAY, 'HAS THERE BEEN A CHANGE'?..... I SHOULD SAY THERE HAS BEEN A CHANGE."

Mr. Benn said on 18th December 1929:—"THERE HAS BEEN NO CHANGE IN POLICY."

It is really difficult to understand why on the eve of the Indian National Congress Mr. Wedgwood Benn should have put himself to the trouble of throwing a wet blanket on the Indian aspirations; why he should have chosen that auspicious occasion to destroy the new-born enthusiasm in India for Dominion Status and British connection.

Ten days after the Secretary of State's statement, the Indian National Congress—whose leaders believing in British good faith had welcomed the new change of which Mr. Benn had spoken on the 7th of November and the Viceroy had anticipated in his statement of November 1st—in disgust and rage, proclaimed that

Britain could not be trusted; that Socialist and Conservative were united in their Imperialist mission of exploitation of India for Britain's prosperity and glory; and that henceforward India should struggle for complete independence, severing every conceivable connexion with England.

Either the Socialist Secretary for India and the Conservative Viceroy should not have made India believe that there was a change of policy; or bravely stuck to it having made India believe both by their proclamation of Dominion Status and the invitation of her leaders to a Round Table Conference in Downing Street. Recalling how the Irish leaders were invited to a conference at 10 Downing Street on Wednesday the 10th of October 1921 India thought that His Majesty's Government had inaugurated a new era of good-will which they meant to crown with the grant of Dominion Status. India was shocked to find that His Majesty's Government meant nothing of the kind. Therefore the Congress decided to have no more to do with any British Party or Government. The Congress delegates burned the Union Jack, unfurled the National Flag, their banner of revolt and shouted on the Christmas day—"long live revolution"—a shout that was heard in London. Newspaper posters advertised that India was on the verge of a tremendous revolt.

The Indian National Congress, the most powerful political organization in the country, openly declared Independence and decided to break with Britain. The method by which it proposed to attain its immediate objective was by adopting Civil Disobedience. This was the terrible weapon it proposed to wield.

This decision of the most militant and courageous section of the politically-minded Indians made British

Socialism indignant as must be obvious to those who had read the interesting outburst of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for India, Earl Russell.

"No one knows better than the Indians that the brave words demanding complete independence are very foolish words," said, Earl Russell, Under-Secretary for India, addressing a meeting of the Cambridgeshire Labour Party in Cambridge yesterday.¹ Dominion status, he said, was not possible at the moment, and would not be for a long time. This country had been guiding India along the road towards democracy. To let go suddenly would be a calamity for India. What would happen, heaven alone knew. It was clear that the Indians did not know. Our fellow-subjects of the Indian Empire had not yet learned to walk, in the matter of Parliamentary government."

More bombastic and insulting words were never uttered,—such was the feeling of the Indian Moderates.

How easily the Indian National Congress could have been prevented from passing the resolution of breaking with the British connexion, felt our Moderates. There must be some party in England which believes in Dominion Status for India. The Socialists,—who promised when they came to office, to provide the "golden link" in the chain of Indo-British connexion,—assumed the same attitude towards India as the Conservatives and the Liberals. India, therefore, it was widely felt, was doomed in British party politics to be the Cinderella of the House of Commons.

Nevertheless it is unfortunate that the National Congress should have in despair decided to cut off all connexion with Britain owing to the folly of the British

1. The *Sunday Times*, January 5, 1930.

Government and the party politicians. There is a power higher than the British parties. That power is the democracy of Britain. If, instead of passing a resolution on Sovereign Independence and burning the boats and the Union Jack, the Congress people had gone to England to educate the English voters on Indian Home Rule, they would have been more prudent and practical. If any party ventures to go to the democratically-minded people of Britain and ask them whether a people different to them in race, culture and colour should be liberated from the yoke of their politicians or should continue to groan under that yoke, the only answer that they would give would be "withdraw that yoke." The parties in England are perfectly certain of that answer. Hence their anxiety to keep India out of live party politics.

The Congress has no faith in British parties who, it says, have all been false to India—but Britain is greater than her parties, cabinets, cabals and camarillas. It is a tragedy that the leaders of the Indian National Congress should have omitted to approach Britain over the heads of parties.

The Congress hastily preferred the short cut of independence. With bleeding feet, its brave men proposed to march to their goal reckless of cost or hazard. The might of the British arms, they said, frightened them not. The prisons had no terror for them. Nor even the gallows. Their Commander-in-Chief was also their saint—Gandhi. A follower of Christ—Gandhi proposed to rise against British Imperialism even as Christ rose against Roman despotism. His was the gospel of non-violent revolt. "Peace hath her victories," felt he.

While Gandhi was treading the path for non-violent non-co-operation, the revolutionary was preparing

the road of revolution.¹ And the attitude of the man-in-the-street in England is one of supreme indifference to Gandhi and the revolutionary alike.

The cartoon in *Punch* of January 8, 1930 represents the British ignorance of the Indian situation. India is painted by *Punch* as the elephant. From the thickest jungle emerges the tiger—Revolution. "Come and join us," says the tiger to the elephant. "Not me," says the wise elephant, "I know too much about the jungle."

The Indian elephant has not accepted the invitation of the revolutionary tiger. It is a tame elephant. "The call of the old chaos," as *Punch* puts it, inspires it not.

1. See my book "India, Peace or War," Harraps, London.

CHAPTER II

THE TIGER AND THE ELEPHANT

"How better, in this time of anxious questioning and perplexed policy, could we show our confidence in the principles of liberty, as the sources as well as the expression of life, how better could we demonstrate our own self-possession and steadfastness in the courses of justice and disinterestedness than by thus going calmly forward to fulfil our promises to a dependent people, who will look more anxiously than ever to see whether we have indeed the liberality, the unselfishness, the courage, the faith we have boasted and professed."—

Woodrow Wilson: December 1914

Punch like the average Briton may be inclined to belittle the importance of Gandhi and the Congress. *Punch* does not stand alone amongst the organs of the press in so underestimating their power or worth. *Punch* at least has the legitimate excuse of a humourist. Its purpose is to raise a laugh. That purpose was fully and faithfully served by the cartoon to which reference was made in the foregoing chapter.

Punch's joke about the elephant and the tiger will be appreciated not only by Englishmen but also by Indians. The revolutionaries will take it as a tribute to their ferocity. One of them had already scorned the 'vegetarian' policy of Gandhi. His 'non-violent revolution' reminded them of 'vegetarian tigers'—a figure of speech which appealed to as high an authority as the late Lord Brentford who quoted it with approval in one of his essays on India which the *Morning Post* of November 2, 1929, published under the flaring three-column heading "Letting the Tiger Loose in India." With prophetic foresight, Viscount

Brentford who, as Sir William Joynson-Hicks, was the Home Secretary in the last Conservative Government, wrote in the official organ of his party just a few weeks before the attempt was made to wreck the Viceregal special train carrying Lord and Lady Irwin.¹

"And now it seems that the Government is moving in the direction of Dominion Home Rule"—a move which will not be accepted for one single moment by the Extremists—"one of whom wrote sometime ago that you might as well speak of a non-violent revolutionary as of a vegetarian tiger."

The non-violent revolutionaries however, exist in India. They have still a majority in the Indian National Congress whose creed is the attainment of independence by peaceful and non-violent means. How long the Congress will tread the path of peace yet remains to be seen. So long as its leadership is retained by Gandhi, its creed will remain unchanged. So far, Gandhi has resisted the attempt of the violent revolutionary to alter the Congress creed. Up to now he has successfully prevented the Congress from following the tiger's lead.

The method of the tiger is different from the method of the elephant, but their goal is the same. Their goal is the attainment of independence. Not because independence is better than Dominion Status, but, in the opinion of the Congress and the revolutionary, independence is easier to attain than Dominion Status! Dominion Status cannot be attained without the good will of Britain, her sympathy, her sanction but independence can be achieved with the sanction of the Indian people alone!!

1. See *India : Peace or War*.

CHAPTER III

CRUSADE AGAINST GANDHI

".....a barbarous noise environs me
Of owls and cuckoos, asses, apes, and dogs"

Milton.

On 4th January 1930, there appeared in the *Daily Mail*, under a four-column headline in thick black type "Digging our grave in India," from the pen of Sir Michael O'Dwyer, formerly Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab, a furiously polemical article attacking Mahatma Gandhi. Sir Michael O'Dwyer has apparently not forgiven Gandhi. Sir Michael O'Dwyer's recall, the Indian National Congress demanded after the shooting in Amritsar and the subsequent Martial Law regime in the Punjab. Under the *de facto* leadership of Gandhi, when the Congress met in Amritsar, the sacred city of the Punjab, not long ago, the administration of Sir Michael O'Dwyer was condemned in strong speeches. No Indian will, therefore, attach any importance to the angry outburst of Sir Michael O'Dwyer of all people against our Mahatmaji. Sir Michael O'Dwyer puts in the mouth of a mysterious Irish Nationalist: "That man is the biggest impostor." Gandhi, at any rate, is honoured in his own country. He is also honoured by thousands of people in Asia and America, also in Great Britain and Sir Michael O'Dwyer's own country, Ireland.

To call Gandhi "an impostor" is the limit. Only a spiteful enemy can use that language. The late Edwin Montagu, the then Secretary of State for India, was happy to refer to Gandhi in his famous

speech in Parliament in May, 1919, as his "friend"; as "a very great and distinguished Indian, a man of the highest motives and finest character, a man who has deserved well of his country both in India and outside it." ¹

The worst that can be said against Gandhi by a political opponent is contained in these words of warning uttered by a responsible British critic: ²

"That veteran saint (whose motives it is doubtless impious to analyse, but whose activities it may none the less be a duty to resist) has apparently once more convinced himself, in spite of bitter experience to the contrary in the past, that non-co-operation and non-violence are compatible terms. Can the hot-heads be sure that there will not be another orgy of penitence and self-disgust on his part when the blood begins to flow?.....If Gandhi throws down the torch as soon as he feels the scorch of it on his soul, it may not make much difference; others many pick it up."

The *New Statesman* which is one of the most devout opponents of Gandhi and the Congress wrote on January 4 1930:—

"Gandhi is the Mahatma, the Messiah of India, possessing almost all over India an influence such as has never been possessed before by any one man since the British occupation first began in the 18th century. He alone makes the Congress party really important."

Knowledge of Gandhi's power compelled the *New Statesman* to ask the British Government and the Government of India to boycott Gandhi and his fellow-boycotters. It had a poor opinion of Lord Irwin

1. Edwin Montagu's Speeches.

2. "Nation and Athenaeum" in its issue of 4th January 1930.

who could not be trusted to do anything so heroic. "The present Viceroy," it wrote, "is evidently not the man for the job. He is indiscriminately conciliatory."

The *Daily Mail*, of course, wanted the Labour Government to recall Lord Irwin and send out Mr. Winston Churchill to India "to govern"! This journal, however, forgot that a truly Socialist Government would much rather send out George Lansbury to liquidate the Empire in India! But Lansbury is getting old and 'Socialism in our times' is yet a cry in the wilderness.

That the *New Statesman*, a semi-Socialist weekly, should have taken an unsympathetic line only discloses the amount of hostility that prevails in Indian circles against Indian aspirations. In the opinion of the *New Statesman*: "We cannot give democracy and Self-Government to India.

"What is needed at the moment—and for the next ten years or so—is a very firm Government which will ignore the extremists—will in fact boycott the boycotters—and at the same time press forward resolutely with such constitutional reforms and advances as circumstances may seem to render practicable. At all events it is time for the ending of the misunderstandings or the pusillanimities which have been displayed by successive British Governments during the last twelve years. We must continue really to govern India until we have taught her to govern herself, and throughout the whole of the long lesson we must continue to show her what Government means."

If this advice is seriously followed by the Government, there will not be a single co-operator left in India—the politicians, one and all, would embrace the creed of boycott—and by boycotting the boycotters, Britain would have boycotted India herself.

That is not the way of wisdom. That is the optimism of ignorance. That is a proposal to lose India. The more statesmanlike course will be to prepare India for Dominion Status by a rapid Indianization all round including the officers in the Indian Army. Without Home Defence there can be no true Home Rule. *What India wants is not mere civil and constitutional reforms but also the creation of an Indian Army and Navy officered by Indians themselves.* And when such an Army is created, England can safely decrease her military burdens and the money so saved can be used for mitigating the rigours of unemployment.

All wise Englishmen who realize that India has to be conciliated, that the Indian problem has to be solved, that the policy of forcing an impossible alien rule on an unwilling people cannot endure, admit that this is no time to force the Government to persist in a programme of reaction and repression. But the irreconcilables still continue to clamour for Lord Irwin's head. They feel today exactly as the *Daily Mail* which wrote on 4th January 1930 :—

"So long as Conservatives and the shadow Cabinet afford Lord Irwin direct or indirect countenance, they are hopelessly compromising their party in the country and endangering vital national interests in India. The effect of their mistake and his weakness is to be seen in the growing violence of the agitation for Dominion Status by the Indian revolutionaries, which has already had an alarming reaction on Indian credit. Indian gilt-edged securities have fallen to a 6 per cent. basis, and *if the policy of weakness be maintained at Delhi will degenerate into mere gambling counters.*

The appointment of Lord Irwin is not the only blunder which the late Government committed in

Indian affairs. By abolishing the tea duty it deprived India of a preference which was of real value, and thus caused not unreasonable resentment in India without any intelligible excuse.

Lord Irwin's Government accepted the principle of "discriminating protection." This principle of protection India wants to apply against all outsiders—be they within or outside the Empire. The Indian industries are in their infancy. The merest tyro in economics, even a full-flooded free trader, will admit that protection is necessary for a country whose industries are in their embryonic stage. When however Indian industries reach their adolescence and can compete with Empire industries on equal terms, India will agree to Empire preference or free trade within the Empire. And that agreement can be reached, even then, only on one condition that India enjoys the same status and autonomy as the Dominions enjoy. The Rothermere press which has been conducting a merciless war on India's right to freedom cannot expect India to support its pet scheme of Empire free trade.

It is amusing to note that the *Daily Mail* will not accept Mr. Baldwin's agreement to the new tariff policy propounded by its master. It wrote on 8th January 1930:

"Before he touches the new tariff policy Mr. Baldwin has to tell the voters precisely what communication he made to Lord Irwin in the matter of India. What the public does know is that Mr. Baldwin's premature and ill-considered assent to Lord Irwin's promise of Dominion Status was the crowning blunder in a career of blunders. It slighted the Simon Commission. It immensely encouraged the extremists. It dealt a grave blow at Great Britain and the Empire. What the after-

effects will be no man can say. The Indian crisis is not over."

No, the Indian crisis is not over. It has only begun. Every Indian must be grateful to the Rothermere press for its vociferous campaign against India. England had slept long on the Indian problem. When India was burning, the Neros of Whitehall were fiddling.

The average English voter—usually ill-informed about India—thought that all was well with India; that Indians had acquiesced in British Rule; that they no longer talked of Home Rule much less dreamt of independence. The *Daily Mail* campaign on the danger in India has produced an effect which Gandhi could not have created had he and his Congress spent a crore of rupees on propaganda in England. The freedom-loving Englishman has naturally begun to say: "If Indians want Home Rule, it is but natural. Having given Ireland Home Rule, so near to us and with so many objections to having an Independent Ireland in our neighbourhood, we cannot with any justice deny India Home Rule."

CHAPTER IV

IRELAND—AND INDIA.

"Without freedom all these great concessions are practically valueless, or at any rate such value as they do possess is to be found in the fact that they strengthen the aim of the Irish people to push on to the great goal of national independence.....I have come here to-day to America to ask you to give us your aid in a supreme and I believe a final effort to dethrone once and for all the English Government of our country."

Mr. Redmond in October 1910.*

"Sometimes isolated incidents are like history read by flashes of lightning," wrote Mr. J. L. Garvin in the *Sunday Observer* on December 29, 1929. The great journalist was brooding over the processional entry into Lahore of Gandhi and the Congress President led by a drum and fife band playing 'the old Irish rebel song,' the *Wearing of the green*. "To have that song carried from Hibernia to the Punjab is one of the extraordinary episodes of all history." Mr. Garvin is right.

Another striking episode which escaped Mr. Garvin but which has a close resemblance to the Irish situation when it emerged from Dominion Status to Independence also occurred at Lahore. That was the entry of Gandhi on the Independence stage. Less than a decade ago, when the Indian National Congress met on the Christmas Day in Gandhi's

**The Revolution in Ireland* (p. 57)

By W. Alison Phillips (Longmans, Green & Co., 1923).

capital, Ahmedabad, a Mohamedan leader of Cawnpore, Maulana Hasrat Mohani, had moved that the peaceful creed of the Congress should be changed, its non-violence must yield place to militant action and the goal should henceforth be not Home Rule but Independence. Gandhi resisted this Mohamedan leader who was then at the height of his fame. Mohani was subsequently arrested and tried for his speech, for justifying and preaching violence, and given two years. Gandhi then had some faith in Britain yet. He believed in Home Rule and British connexion. He waited for ten years. Britain gave no indication of granting India early Home Rule.

On the constitutional question, Britain had bungled by sending out an all white Commission under the Chairmanship of Sir John Simon to enquire into India's fitness for Home Rule. Indian Nationalists, boycotted the Commission and scorned the idea of an enquiry into their fitness for Home Rule. Gandhi who had the patience of Job began to feel that young India was justified in feeling that it was incompatible with her dignity and aspiration to ask for colonial autonomy. The resurrection of India must come from within. Freedom will not be granted as a Christmas gift. Therefore Gandhi definitely joined the Independence movement. Many others who had stood with him hitherto for British connexion went forward into the fray.

Who does not recall how the Irish Home Rulers joined Sinn Fein, disgusted with the delay on the part of England to grant Ireland Home Rule? The same thing was happening in India. Says Mr. Alison Phillips who contributed the article on the recent political history of Ireland to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (twelfth edition): "Mr. Redmond, who found himself fraternising with that redoubtable

patriot, Patrick Ford, ex-dynamite, and editor of the *Irish World*, occasionally fell or was forced into an extreme strain." While Redmond never seriously took up the leadership of the Irish Independence movement, Gandhi definitely assumed it.

The Socialist Government which was a pendulum between Conservatism and Liberalism could not show the courage necessary to give to India what Lloyd George gave Ireland. But many Socialists felt that it would be utter bankruptcy of British statesmanship which would lay down that India must pass through the same gory stages before she reached the goal of Home Rule.

"Amongst the many millions of our new electorate, hardly one in a thousand has the vaguest knowledge of India," wrote Mr. J. L. Garvin¹. Ignorance can be no excuse for the performance of their duty. The Government of India is responsible not to an Indian electorate but to the British electorate. Here is a mighty opponent of Indian aspirations who bases his opposition on the ignorance of the electorate. That ignorance, however, is India's best justification for asking for the immediate transfer of that responsibility from the British to the Indian electorate. That ignorance and the impossibility of educating a distant electorate, including the myriads of flappers on the dull boring problem of India's constitutional rights can never be removed. Why should a British voter worry about Indians and their desires and ambitions and difficulties and grievances? We do not blame the British electorate for not taking the trouble to understand or study the Indian problem. But India cannot allow her enemies in England to deny her her God-given right to freedom on the unjustifiable ground of British ignorance.

¹ In *The Observer* of December 24, 1929.

"Between Calcutta and the Khyber Pass," observes Mr. Garvin, "one analogy springs repeatedly to the eye—a certain resemblance to Ireland as it was not long ago with its racial and sectarian rivalries, its imaginative ardour and its emotional vehemence applied to a Nationalist agitation." No purpose will be served by emphasising unduly the sectarian and racial rivalries. A century of such extravagant emphasis did not avail Britain in the long run. She had to settle the Irish problem.

Any such delay, any such timorousness in approaching the Indian problem will only result in the loss of India to the Empire. For as Mr. Garvin himself admits, "The Indian question is like the former Irish question, except that it is a hundred times larger and a thousand times more complicated, with imaginative emotionalism capable of working itself up to far higher pressure and with explosive possibilities in proportion."¹ Therefore if India goes the first way, India cannot be saved as Ireland could be, for Britain and the Empire.

Mr. Garvin says: "Those who are unable to perceive the peculiar force of the analogy between India and Ireland are blind indeed; and the analogy teaches what to avoid"—namely delay; repression; faith in the use of force to coerce a nation determined to come into its own.

Mr. Garvin, however, called for resolute government; for repression; for putting down Gandhi and the Congress. He quoted a masterly thinker with approval: "For every war we have waged in India, we have prevented twenty. In this spirit and in the calm nobility of it, we must hold strongly to our duty, unhurried and undismayed."

Mr. Garvin has no substitute in India for the Pax Britannica. He has no doubt for many generations

1 Ibid.

there will be no substitute—unless indeed our weakness and India's disaster are followed some day by the restoration of peace under other rulers after the extinction of freedom." A grosser misreading of Indian history never was and never could be. When civil wars were besmirching the fair fame of England, peace and plenty reigned in India. Through shining scores of centuries, India has been self-governing. From millennium to millennium, India's culture and civilization, the valour of her heroes, the songs of her poets and the dramas of Kalidas and Bhavabhuti and the flight in the realms of philosophy of Sankara, Ramanuja and Buddha shed a serene lustre over the world. The grant of Dominion Status did not mean extinction of freedom in South Africa, in Ireland and in Canada. The War of Independence did not bring to the United States disaster and eternal woe. "God's Englishmen," to use Milton's phrase, are apt to exaggerate their importance to India. If England withdraws, they say, India will be lost in chaos! The tragedy—or is it the comedy—of the whole situation is that even gifted and informed men in England are unwilling to recognize a half-way house between complete independence and present domination.

The extreme Nationalist with abundant faith in the capacity of his own countrymen—despairing that any good would ever come of parleying with England—no wonder, decided to break with Britain. He is perfectly confident of achieving what Ireland has failed to achieve—Sovereign Independence.

"More and more Sinn Fein has become the model for that fervently extreme school of Hindu nationalism which is now beginning an intense effort to prevail," says Garvin. True. Very true. And the reason for this transformation is not far to seek. The Nationalists after years of constitutional agitation and a study of the manner in which England has yielded power to

its dependencies decided to pursue the same methods.

"The playing of the 'Wearing of the green' in Lahore is no freak," remarked Garvin soon after the Lahore Congress. "The tune has been deliberately adopted as an anthem of the Congress. It implies an attempt to imitate the Irish model right through ; and to go further if possible up to complete independence." It was an endeavour to hasten the day when Indian sepoys would refuse to shoot Indians down as they did under Dyer's order in Amritsar. Tremendous significance attached in Britain's eye therefore to Gandhi's alliance with the Sikhs—who fought the British battles in India and helped Britain to found her Empire in India—an alliance which naturally caused quite a flutter in the Tory doves.

The *Morning Post*—the strength of whose resistance to Indian demands for Home Rule is equalled only by its deep insight into the baffling intricacies and appreciation of the terrific possibilities of Indian movements—saw danger in the Gandhi-Sikh alliance. It published on January 6, 1930, the portraits of Sirdar Kharak Singh and Gandhi, "each formidable in his own way," as its special correspondent put it, who came to an ominous understanding at Lahore. Its 'special correspondent' described Gandhi as "the leader of the Swarajya movement who believed or pretends to believe in obtaining independence for India by non-violence.

"Kharak Singh, on the other hand, is called by his admirers the "uncrowned king of the Sikhs," that warlike sect from a large part of the Indian Army is recruited."

"The Gandhi picture suggests the physical debility and the mental cunning of the down-country

Hindu of the bania (or money-lending) caste to which he belongs. The Kharak Singh portrait indicates the courage and simplicity of a race of landowning cultivator-warriors.

"The bania has always exploited the Sikh, and this present alliance is probably no exception to that rule, for the Sikh will have the blows and the bania the half-pence of the arrangement.

"Sirdar Kharak Singh is a leader of great importance in the Punjab, ex-President of the Provincial Congress, of the Central Sikh League and of the Akali Dal (Volunteer Forces), and President of the Sikh Temple Committee. The Akali Sikhs, of whom he is a leader, are an aggressive faction; they have secured the control of the Sikh Temple funds, and are therefore in a strong position. They have behind them also a large number of ex-soldiers of the Indian Army and probably also the remnant of that Ghadr Rebellion which was crushed in 1915.

"The Congress Party had antagonised these Sikhs in the Nehru Constitution, which was called an 'insult' by Kharak Singh. 'Follow me,' he exclaimed, 'and I shall carry the flag of Indian freedom. If you find a bullet in my back don't count me among the Sikhs.'

"It was in this spirit that the Akali Sikhs marched on Lahore. Although a tiny fraction in the population of India the claim of their leaders was for a commanding share in any form of government that might be coming, and their intention was to force their views upon the Congress, if necessary with the cold steel of their *kirpans*.

"Kharak Singh and his Sikhs marched into Lahore with this intention on December 29 last,

to the number of at least ten thousand, some afoot, some on horseback, and some on camels, the Sirdar himself riding on an elephant. They marched in fighting array, with their gleaming knives unsheathed, to the pipes and drums of a band of ex-soldiers; a collision with police and Gurkhas was averted by the tact of the District Magistrate and Superintendent of Police, and the formidable invaders made their bivouac under the walls of the old Fort.

"While the Congress was going on Gandhi and the Sirdar held a secret conference, and on December 30 Kharak Singh announced that he had made satisfactory terms for his people.

"Kharak Singh (says Reuter) therefore advised the Sikhs to work for complete independence."

We have in fairness to the extreme opponents of Indian aspirations reproduced the *Morning Post's* version of the entente between the warlike Sikhs and the intellectual politicians. Some of the picturesque untruths in it, however, must be exposed. To suggest 'physical debility' in Gandhi is ridiculous. Gandhi is a typical Indian saint. Like all Indian saints he starves the body and feeds the soul. He eats most sparingly. He is a slight figure but "strong in will to strive, to seek, to find and not to yield." To insinuate mental cunning on the part of Gandhi is childish. He places all his cards on the table. He believes in open diplomacy. He took no advantage of Lord Irwin's difficulties to fulfil his pledge saying: "His Excellency has cheated us." He carried a resolution in the last session of the Congress in the teeth of extremist opposition appreciating Lord Irwin's sincerity. But Lord Irwin did not go far enough for Gandhi's purposes. Lord Irwin's pledge—though misconstrued by myriads—only vouchsafed Dominion Status in stages. Gandhi wanted it forth-

with. However Lord Irwin's moderation and caution—though misrepresented for party purposes by his and Mr. Baldwin's detractors in the British press—did not induce Gandhi to rejoice, as the Congress extremists openly rejoiced, in the attempt to wreck his train and murder the Viceroy, Lady Irwin, and the staff. Gandhi's devotion to non-violence has never been a make-believe, but a part and parcel of his faith. Non-violence, in fact, is his religion. He is verily the Buddha of this age. Millions of Indians look upon him as the incarnation of Buddha. To insinuate that Gandhi "pretends to believe in non-violence" is sinister. Out of his tremendous sincerity and devotion to non-violence arose his resolution—which startled the revolutionaries of the Congress denouncing "the dastardly outrage" as he put it—and the same words, be it noted, were used by Mr. Wedgwood Benn, His Majesty's Secretary for India, in Parliament. It was again because of his religious devotion to the creed of *Ahimsa* that he threatened to leave the Congress if his resolution was defeated. Thus the National Congress—though only by a majority—stood by Gandhi in the condemnation of the revolutionary attempt to assassinate the Viceroy and Lady Irwin.

The suggestion that the Sikhs would have the blows and Gandhi and his caste the benefits thereof marks more anger than a calm reasoning mood. Gandhi has never shirked fight. He has never proved a deserter. He always put himself in the forefront of the strife. His rebel soul delights in suffering. His faith in suffering is a result of his daily attempt to live up to the teachings of the Jesus of Nazareth. The teachings of Christ, according to Gandhi, are nothing if they are not 'lived up to'. Christ, in Gandhi's opinion, does not want the

parroting of his sayings but expect of his followers to embody them in their lives which would speak louder than the loudest of sermons. Gandhi's life has been a sermon on suffering and sacrifice. "Sell all and follow me" is his message to his disciples. Perhaps 'disciples' is a bad phrase to use in connexion with the followers of Gandhi. He does not recognize in them—their number is legion—even one disciple. That is the disappointment of his would-be disciples including one of them who hopes to live in history as Johnson's Boswell by treasuring up the unrecorded utterances of his Master.

As for the attack in the British press about the antagonising of the Sikhs by the Nehru report, it must be admitted that the report was a production of arm-chair politicians like Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. An adventure in the realms of constitution-making its aim was to unite the moderates and the extremists, the revolutionary and the reactionary. It attempted to make the lion and the lamb good bed-fellows. Instead of cheating the world about the dawn of an Utopia in India of a united political movement whose angelic votaries had ceased to differ among themselves, the authors cheated themselves into imagining that they had performed the greatest miracle of history. Some of them probably imagined that they could confound Britain and their own dissentient countrymen with a phrase ! That phrase was given to the report which was advertised in the Moderate *cum* Extremist press as the "All Parties Report." Its life was fixed for one year. Their offspring was murdered in the Congress at Lahore under the presidency of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

This report did not produce unity. It produced chaos. The astute moderates made use of it to rehabi-

litate their position in the country and their emissaries in England went on a pilgrimage to Whitehall to get out of Mr. Ramsay Macdonald's Government the offer of a Round Table Conference, the price for which—in the shape of resistance to Gandhi and the independence movement—they were willing to pay. They got the Conference and prepared for resistance.

But the secession of the moderates from the Congressmen seemed more than compensated by the alliance of Gandhi with Sikhs. The moderates have been noted for their flight from every brave fight. The Sikhs on the other hand have been noted for their love of the fight. Gandhi meant fight. He had no use for book-worms and constitution-makers. He wanted soldiers.

The Conservative die-hards were disgusted to read of the Gandhi-Sikh alliance. Their views reflected in the *Morning Post* in an editorial under the significant title, "An ominous alliance." It asked Mr. Wedgwood Benn as Hamlet asked his mother to look upon the two pictures which it published—the one

like a mildew'd ear,

Blasting his wholesome brother—

and to ask himself—Can, or should, these two really belong to one nation? Naturally, they are as the poles apart, on the one side, the Sikh, of Scythian ancestry, fair, open-browed, valiant—

the front of Jove himself,

An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;

"The other swarthy, secretive, degenerate, scheming. By the one we are attracted; from the other we are repelled: the one might be a brother of general Nicholson; the other could not be even the most

distant relative of any Norman or Anglo-Saxon. The pictures help us to understand that, if the Aryan is planted in the North, the Dravidian swarms towards the South, so that the Punjabi looks upon the Englishman as his kin in comparison with the "Kala admi," the black man of Lower India. These same Sikhs, once our brave enemies, were made by British policy our constant friends. It was they and the British soldiers who together quelled the Mutiny of an Army recruited in Lower India; and, while Bengal raised hardly a man, one in every fourteen of the Sikh population served under the British flag in the Great War."

This is in parts the language of rage. It is just as well, we quote it. However unjust the reflections on Gandhi and his less martial associates—their being less martial is a result of the British Government policy of confining recruitment to the army to the non-politically-minded classes—the knowledge of the terrific possibilities of the alliance was responsible for its wrath.

By confining the recruitment of soldiers to the Sikhs and Pathans of the Punjab and the Gurkhas and by demobilizing the Bengalee army in the East which under the Command of Mir Jaffar betrayed Siraj-ud-Doulah and helped Clive, the Maharatta army in the South West which fought Aurangzeb and had produced heroes like Sivaji and the armies of South India which fought the battles of Tippu and Hyder Ali,—the British Government had hoped to keep the Army in India out of the political whirlpool and thus avoid a successful revolution which has been from time to time threatened. This time, however, Gandhi's approach of the martial Sikhs, it was apprehended, would affect the age-old policy of Britain. Hence the wrath of the Imperialists and Conservatives.

What have the British Government done to conciliate the Sikhs, asks the *Morning Post*: "The Constitution prepared by Nehru gave no place to the Sikhs as a loyal minority, with the result that the Sikhs marched upon Lahore, and might there, had the Viceroy raised a finger, have helped him to prevent an incipient rebellion. But the British Government made no sign, and Sardar Kharak Singh, a formidable Sikh leader, has made his terms with Gandhi, and has advised his people to fight for complete independence. What a terrible reflection upon British policy that it has forced these two alien minds together!"*

The British Imperialists apprehended that so long as the Sikhs were the vanguard of Gandhi's army, the Independence spirit might percolate into the ranks of the most powerful, the most ferocious and hitherto the most loyal section of the Indian army.

It was further feared by right-minded Englishmen that so long as the Sikhs were not given adequate weightage by way of representation in the Government of India and the Punjab, so long there could be no satisfactory settlement of the Sikh problem; and as the Irish revolutionaries exploited the grievances of a clan or community, so would the Indian agitators exploit the Sikh grievance to strengthen their campaign against the Raj.

Exploitation of the religious feelings and sentiments is one way. Exploitation of the strong feelings about personal injustices is another. And exploitation of the economic grievances is the third. It is in these three ways that the Indian leaders of the Congress school pave the way. The Government

*The *Morning Post*, dated 26th January, 1930.

could not successfully resist the Congress tide, because the aforesaid grievances in the country could not really be abolished in a hurry, if at all. There is no country in the world in which the people are devoid of grievances. It is customary in all countries to hold the Government responsible for popular discontents. In countries where responsible Governments and party politics prevail, the party-in-power is held responsible for the ills of the day. In India, however, in the absence of responsible Government, the permanent services who constitute the powers-that-be, the irremovable official executive responsible to Britain and not India is naturally held responsible for the innumerable grievances of the people. There is no use of protesting against the growing hatred of British officialdom in India. They have been so long its permanent rulers. The people are the permanent opposition. And in an agricultural country, it is easy to hold the Government responsible for the economic grievances—the seedplot of upheavals.

“Political agitation in Ireland,” says a high authority,¹ “whatever sentiment may be behind it, has always derived its main driving force from the real or imaginary economic grievances of the mass of the people.” This is the outstanding fact that favours the extremists in an agricultural country like India where the good harvest is dependent mainly if not wholly on the monsoon.

The British bureaucracy in India cannot regulate the monsoon any more than Whitehall can regulate the weather in England. Even when the monsoon is favourable in one part of India, it is not necessarily

1. *The Revolution in Ireland* (page 47). By W. Alison Phillips.

favourable in another part. When there is a general failure of the monsoon, woe to the alien rule.

How long can the Government base its popularity on the charity or the freaks of nature ?

No wonder, men like Lord Irwin recognise that the alien rule in India must cease—alike in the interest of the alien and the Indian. Make the Government responsible to the people and India would be more loyal to England than she is to-day.

On the 27th of November, 1910, Mr. John Redmond defined his demands for Ireland as *a Parliament elected by the Irish people, with an executive responsible to it, and with full control of purely Irish affairs.*¹ This was not independence. This did not mean a 'clean cut.' All it conveyed was national independence in the internal affairs of Ireland. Another way of putting it is Dominion Status—which in Lord Irwin's words is "the natural issue" in India to-day with which Britain is faced. Must Britain lose India ? Then it had only to promise, pause, prepare, postpone and end by playing into the hands of its enemies. If England wanted to keep India as a friend and an equal partner of the Empire, it had only to embody the spirit of the Irwin-Gandhi pact in the new constitution.

Mr. Garvin who understood the direction in which the Indian tide flowed wrote: "The superficial calculation, no doubt, is that political guerilla called Civil Disobedience in support of a cry for Independence will force in 1930 such concessions, very nearly amounting to the total separation of the larger part of Ireland, as were made to Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins."² The Editor of the *Observer* consoled himself with the thought that "happily, in this atmosphere of emotional

1. *Ibid*, page 58.

2. The *Observer* dated December 29, 1929.

insanity, the policy of Civil Disobedience is not to come into immediate action. It is a suspended threat." Was this much of a consolation? Suppose the Indian leaders were not able to carry out their threat that year or the next year? Suppose even that they were not able successfully to carry out that threat at all? Could it be an excuse for denying and delaying the grant of freedom to India? Can statesmanship take shelter under an excuse? The very fact that the threat hung like the sword of Damocles was enough for the purpose of the agitation. So long as the threat was held out, so long the peoples' allegiance was given not to Britain but to their own leaders ready to do and dare. Imagine what it meant to British prestige in the East—whatever was left of it after years of blundering? Imagine how every day, every month, every year, the hatred of Britain increased in India. The best way to defeat the cause of Dominion Status and strengthen the movement for independence was to ridicule India's fitness for Self-Government as the late Earl Russel, Socialist Under-Secretary for India ridiculed.

CHAPTER V

A CANDID OUTBURST

"Opinion! which on crutches walks,
And sounds the words another talks."

Lloyd—THE POET.

"Opinion's but a fool, that makes us scan
The outward habit by the inward man."

Shakespeare—PERICLES.

In a previous chapter, a speech on Indian Home Rule by the late Lord Russel at Cambridge in his capacity as Parliamentary Under-Secretary for India was briefly referred to. The late Earl Russel—from the present writer's conversation with him—convinced him to be a man perfectly straightforward in the expression of his opinion—one who hated hypocrisy, double-dealing and the dubious ways of bureaucracies and politicians habituated to saying a thing and meaning another or meaning a thing and saying another. The attack that was levelled against the Socialist Government by its Conservative and Liberal critics at home and the Indian National Congress and independent critics abroad was based on their belief that their Indian policy lacked straightness, was too nebulous, too circuitous. Mr. Wedgwood Benn, the Minister in charge of Indian affairs, was accused of playing with words. He said in the House of Commons that "there had been no change of policy but there was of course a great change in procedure. That was the calling of the Conference."¹

1. *Hansard*, Wednesday, December 18, 1930.

He further explained that the Conference must be clothed with full knowledge by which he was supposed to have meant that it should represent all classes, cliques, coteries, the conflicting elements of a sub-continent of Asia.

Meantime Gandhi who had a talk with the Viceroy in the late President Patel's house as to what exactly the Indian representatives and the representatives of the British Government were going to do in the Round Table Conference was told that its object was to arrive at the greatest common measure of agreement. Had Mr. de Valera been told so by Mr. Lloyd George, the Conference that settled the Irish problem would never have been held. Gandhi probably felt like Mr. de Valera. Gandhi went to the Congress at Lahore, took up its leadership from inexperienced hands and following the policy of the late Arthur Griffith induced the Congress to declare Independence as the goal of its policy. It was this resolution that Earl Russel characterised as "foolish."

Gandhi's principal colleague, the late Pundit Motilal Nehru, leader of the Congress Parliamentary group, called on his followers to resign their seats in the Legislatures, because it was not honourable for men who stood out for independence to continue as members of Parliament, admission to which was gained only after the solemn affirmation of the oath of allegiance to His Majesty the King, his heirs and successors. The Pundit obviously suspended this allegiance. This policy of boycotting the Councils in the Provinces and the Central Legislature made Lord Russel exclaim that Indians were infants who did not know the A. B. C. of Parliamentary Government. He ridiculed them as trying to run before they had learned to walk. He was thus giving public expression to what the India Office was privately feeling. This was

considered rather tactless by some adepts in the art of diplomacy. Why blurt out the crudest truth so early in the day? Let the Indian politicians walk into the Socialist parlour. Why take away the inducement which the spider of the fable offered to the fly?

Lord Russel's public expression of Whitehall's opinion became a subject for consultation between the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for India. The Moderates in India who had publicly agreed to defy and defeat the Independence movement cabled to their friends in England and protested in the Indian newspapers against Lord Russel's "outburst"; that they were bound to withdraw their assent to attend the Indo-British Conference in London; that Lord Russel had unsaid what his chief Mr. Wedgwood Benn had said; that his Lordship had gone back on the Irwin policy of establishing Dominion Status in India.

The Moderates' interpretation of the policy of Lord Irwin was different from Whitehall's. That policy was more in harmony with the views that were held in the India Office to which Lord Russel honestly gave vent. But it was a premature speech. Such an expression of opinion would have been tactless even in Conference!

For strategic reasons, Lord Russel was asked by his chief to issue a mild contradiction. The Moderates in India had to be appeased; therefore the contradiction was necessary. The Tories at home had also to be satisfied; therefore the original speech was equally necessary. While the speech was crystal-clear, the contradiction was ambiguous. Earl Russel was equivocating.

Earl Russel issued the following amusing contradiction to the Press in the shape of a message to the people of India:

"The summary of my speech cabled to India has been so abridged as to make it most misleading.

"A fuller report would convince even my worst critics that I pleaded for co-operation in the best interests of England and India.

"My whole speech was devoted to explaining the position in India to those Britishers who had not the time to make a study of it. I never used the phrase "Dominion Status is not possible for a long time." What I actually said was that the evolution of democratic institutions had taken a long time in our own country, and even now was not perfect.

"I hoped that, with the co-operation of Indians, we might be able to evolve a workable scheme in the best interests of all, and in this matter the Labour Party was absolutely sincere.

"I hope my Indian friends will not be misguided by such misleading reports. I deplore the attitude of the Congress as much as I deplore the attitude of the Tories and their Press, who are causing the present embarrassment, and I trust my Indian friends will rally round the proposals of Lord Irwin, than whom there is no better friend of India."*

The above contradiction only confirmed the denial of any idea on the part of the Socialist Government of the immediate grant of Home Rule to India. Lord Russel was of opinion that 'the evolution of democratic institutions' had taken centuries in England and India had to wait patiently in the corridor of time for the ultimate evolution of a self-governing democracy. This was stipulated in the preamble to the Government of India Act which was the policy of Parliament and of the Socialist Government.

*The *Times*, January 9, 1930.

India did not misunderstand Lord Russel. Only the Nationalist and Congress leaders used his speech for effectively exposing the Moderates as living and loving to live in a fool's paradise. After congratulating India on the frank disclosure of the cabinet views in regard to India and praising Lord Russel himself on blurting out "the unvarnished truth," the Congress Party leader issued the following communique:—

"Let the Liberals and other wise men who want to enter the Councils to achieve independence derive such consolation as they may from the Under-Secretary's explanations.

"Congress will not be affected by them. We have come to the parting of the ways. It will serve no useful purpose to ridicule Congress, which will not be deflected. Swaraj cannot be attained by a boycott of the Legislatures alone. The law courts, educational institutions, and Government services should also be boycotted with a view to paralysing the Government, but a boycott of the services is impossible of success at present. Congress selected the Council boycott in the first instance because it is inseparably connected with independence and civil disobedience."

The Calcutta correspondent of the *Times* cabled as follows about the effect in India of Lord Russel's speech:

"Calcutta, January 8. The report of Lord Russel's speech at Cambridge, while disconcerting to the Moderate parties, which were showing signs of rallying in opposition to the Congress policy, has been seized upon by the Nationalist Press as the basis of a raging tearing propaganda, in which Lord Russel is held to have revealed the real mind of the Government and shown the hollowness of the talk about Dominion Status.

"Liberty writes:—

If there are any in the ranks of the Moderates who still keep an open mind we would commend their attention to this speech. Will it be too much to hope that our Moderate friends will profit by this latest manifestation of Great Britain's good-will ?

"Advance, the new organ of Mr. Sen Gupta, the leader of the Congress Party in the Bengal Council, says:—

If we pity Lord Russel for his astounding folly and ignorance, we must thank him for the fact that his speech has smashed up and shattered the hopes throbbing in the breasts of political wiseacres in India.

"Basumati holds that the utterance is honest and candid, and faithfully reflects the views, not only of the Sydenhamites and other ex-official groups, but also of practically the whole of Great Britain, including the members of the Labour Government and members of the Labour Party, other than a few Extremists of the Left Wing."

The Moderates were in a pathetic position. They were telling Indians that they would bring—after hard work in the forthcoming London Conference—Home Rule for India. But Lord Russel had said without mincing matters that Home Rule for India was a distant if beautiful dream.

The sorrow and anger of the Moderates could be better imagined than described. Mrs. Besant's Home Rule Party which had accepted the invitation of the Labour Government to a Conference in London was also seriously reconsidering their position. Their friend in Parliament Major Graham Pole, then M. P., who is also the Honorary Secretary of the British

committee on Indian affairs published his protest against Lord Russel's speech and the unsatisfactory explanation thereof :—

“ Lord Russel says that the situation with regard to India has not been materially altered by his speech. Does he deny that the loss of the co-operation of such men as the Right Hon. Srinivasa Sastri, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Sir Ali Imam, Sir Phiroze Sethna, Mr. C. Y. Chintamani, Mr. N. C. Kelkar, Mr. M. A. Jinnah—to name only a few—is material or not?

“ As the direct result of his ill-considered words in his capacity as Under-Secretary of State for India these men have already intimated that, if his words mean what they appear to mean, neither they nor any other self-respecting Indian would attend the forthcoming Round Table Conference in London.

“ The purpose of that Conference is to see to what extent an agreed solution could be arrived at in regard to the Indian constitutional problems. These men, most of whom have held high Government posts in India and elsewhere, under most difficult and trying circumstances in their own country, have expressed their willingness to co-operate. At this vital juncture, when things are in a most critical and dangerous condition, the Under-Secretary of State has thought fit to say that progress towards responsible government can only be very slow, and that Dominion Status, being almost synonymous with complete independence, the hope of obtaining it is remote.

“ Is this in harmony with the speech of his chief in the House of Commons, which was an endeavour to meet a similar argument put forward by Lord Birkenhead? Lord Russel even yet seems to be

entirely unaware of the importance attached to his words and his office."

Major Graham Pole was right in saying that Lord Russel's candour had embarrassed the Moderates and Besantites in India but he was wrong in stating that it was not in harmony with the utterance of the Socialist Secretary in India in the House of Commons. Go through Mr. Benn's speech in the House of Commons and you will fail to discover in it any pledge or assurance about the early grant of Dominion Status. Mr. Benn had said that the appointment of an Indian as a representative to an international conference on aerial navigation, a privilege which the other Dominions enjoyed, was tantamount to granting India Dominion Status which had already become part and parcel of the British policy towards India.¹ He further maintained that India had attained Dominion privileges when India was represented at an important conference in London dealing with Dominion legislation; when the Indian representative sat side by side with the representatives of Canada, South Africa, Australia, Newzealand, and the Irish Free State. India was likewise allotted representation at the Five-Power Naval Conference, with the rest of the Dominions, whereat the Indian representatives like the Dominion representatives would have voice and vote.²

A Labour back-bencher observed that these Indian representatives were the nominees of the Viceroy unlike the Colonial representatives who were the leaders of the people and appealed to the Secretary of State to secure a more adequate representation of India at these Conferences by giving the Indian Legislature some powers in the appointment of these delegations

1. *Hansard*, Wednesday, Dec. 18, 1929.

2. *Ibid.*

a suggestion which Mr. Benn merely agreed to take note of. The back bencher was no other than Mr. Fenner Brockway, then M. P., the Editor of the *New Leader*, an enthusiast for Indian Home Rule.

Moderates and Extremists ridiculed the conception of the claims of India for Home Rule, namely that what India needed was the alteration of the mode of representation in the Imperial Conferences !

"The Indian representative," wrote the Congress Press, "is no more than a prize-boy of Government of India whereas the Colonial representative is a Minister of a Government which represents the people."

India has no objection to a Government representative in Imperial or Inter-national Conference. India's objection is to the present system of Government. The Government of India owes no iota of responsibility to the people over whom it sways. Its constitutional responsibility is to the Secretary of State who is responsible to the Cabinet which is responsible to Parliament which is finally responsible to the British voters.

Neither the Socialist Secretary for India nor the most vociferous champion of Indian Home Rule in Parliament appeared to understand what exactly would satisfy India. Formal representations of India at the Empire or Inter-national Conferences have no use for a country which is given for the advantage of Britain—the advantage being to add to the numerical strength of her votes—the shadow of representation abroad but denied the substance of representative institutions at home.

Earl Russel was speaking not of the shadow but of the substance. So far as substance went Mr. Benn had unequivocally stated that there has been "no change of policy" in regard to India which the

Socialist Government's Conservative and other predecessors had laid down.

That policy—judging from what it has hitherto been and what it is and not from what it will be or will have to be—was neatly summed up in the speech of Earl Russel, a revised version of which appeared in an evening paper in London.¹

“I have been told,” said Earl Russel, “you would like to hear about India, but because I am the Under-Secretary and may know so much I can tell you so little. Those of you who read the newspapers will see that our difficulties have not been made less during the Christmas season. Resolutions have been passed demanding the complete independence of India. They were brave words, but they were very foolish words, and nobody knows better than the Indians themselves that complete independence at this moment is impossible.

“Between Dominion Status and complete Independence there is not much difference, and that is not possible at this moment. When you have been bringing up a country and guiding it you cannot suddenly let go and say: ‘Manage things for yourselves.’ It takes practice to manage things for yourselves. How much only those who have watched the struggle of democracy know. Even the Labour Party, even the leaders of the Labour Party, found it difficult when they first took office, and we knew what we wanted.

“In India they would have insuperable difficulties in running things for themselves if we suddenly let go. There are many races and at least two dominant religions, and these races and religions do not work sympathetically together. And even in the

1. The *Evening Standard* of the 3th January, 1930.

discussions they have been divided, and they have not arrived at any way of living with each other. What they would do if they were suddenly left to themselves, what would happen, heaven only knows, and it is quite clear that Indians do not know.

"A child must learn to walk before it can run, and without in the least disparaging our subjects in the Indian Empire I say they have not yet learned to walk, and it will be some time before they can run.

"You had in Cambridge as your representative Edwin Montagu. He initiated the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms which were intended to form the basis of gradual self-government in India. What has been tried is a system of a sort of joint government in the Provincial legislatures, and the Indians have been slowly learning the arts of self-government. We do not wish all that to be thrown away, and we do not wish them to be thrown back into hopeless turmoil.

"We say to them, let them go along that road until they have become really capable of self-government. And the Labour Government, at any rate, is perfectly honest in saying that is our objective. That is what we are working for, but we are not helped in working for it by such foolish resolutions. No friend of India can but regret the tone of these resolutions. We are trying to get India along the road of peace in unity, with Indians making their own laws and administering them themselves.

"That is the road along which haste can be made slowly. Impatience does not help. The young are impatient, and those who are young in democratic government are equally impatient, but those who are older know that impatience does not a bit of good, and the short cut is not the quickest way.

My chief at the India Office is determined not to be hampered by foolish resolutions."

Read in the light of the policy of Britain towards India and the preamble to the Government of India Act, there was nothing in the speech of Lord Russel to which any honest man could take exception. "Read in the light of the speech," exclaimed the Congress leader, "the Round Table Conference in London was doomed to be a waste of time and a fresh cause for misunderstanding." Incidentally the new Congress policy confirmed their familiar anticipation and revealed their future plans.

The position that Mahatma Gandhi decided to take was felt by the Congress people to be the only self-respecting attitude for any patriotic Indian to take. Gandhi clearly explained his own position and that of the Indian National Congress in his weekly paper, *Young India*.

"The time must come when there may be a fight to a finish with one's back to the wall," declared Gandhi, writing in *Young India*. "With the present temper of Congressmen, with our internal dissensions, and with communal tension, it is difficult to discover an effective, innocent formula," he continued.

"It may be impossible to offer civil disobedience at this stage in the name of the Congress; it may be necessary to offer individual civil disobedience without the imprimatur of Congress and apart from it, but just now everything is in an embryonic state."

In the opinion of Gandhi, the Congress resolution about independence did not rule out the idea of a conference in every circumstance :—

"It merely and most properly says that in existing circumstances no good purpose can be served by the Congress being represented at the proposed

Conference. What are, then, the conceivable circumstances in which the Congress may be represented at such Conference? I can mention at least one such circumstance. If the British Government invites the Congress to a conference that is to discuss and frame, not any scheme, but a scheme definitely of an Independent Government and fulfils other conditions suitable for such a conference, I take it that the Congress leaders will gladly respond. Indeed, a conference there must be at some stage or other. It can take place, as the proposed Conference was expected to take place, out of Great Britain's good grace, or the pressure of world opinion, or out of pressure from us, as we hope it will be, if we develop sufficient strength. Whether such time is far or near depends upon how we utilize or waste this year."

If the British parties considered that Indians were not fit for Self-Government, the most proper thing for them would have been to scrap the Montagu reforms. If they thought that India must be granted Dominion Status it was better for them to abandon their attitude of opposition to Indian claims. That was how the Congress felt.

The White Paper reforms will not satisfy the Congress Right Wing whose programme was :

First: The grant of Home Rule to British India and the rapid preparation of India for self-defence and the withdrawal of the British garrison; and the simultaneous preparation of the Indian States by the rulers of the States themselves establishing responsible government in their territories.

Secondly: The introduction of full responsible Government for pan-India, and the setting up of a Supreme Parliament to which both British India and

the Indian States would send their representatives. That Supreme Parliament, they will urge, should have the same power in Indian matters as the Dominion Parliaments have in the Dominion affairs.

History will repeat itself and a future leader of the Congress Right Wing will make such a demand in the Legislature, proclaiming his anxiety to come to terms with England. The same anxiety, however, might not be shared by the Left Wingers who might not care to come to terms with England except on the terms dictated by a victorious opponent. The Congress Left Wing is only marking time.

One can imagine the Congress leader of the opposition in the Legislature appealing to Britain to come to an understanding with Mahatmaji in the difficult task of settling the Indian question once for all even as General Smuts came to an understanding with the self-same Gandhi in regard to the Indian difficulties in South Africa. One can hear the voice of the future: "If England misses this golden opportunity she will never again have such a splendid chance. A settlement to-day will leave no bitterness behind. A belated settlement as in Ireland will leave bitter memories in its trail."

Meantime, the White Paper Scheme will run the risk of being whittled down. Newspapers said that Lord Willingdon would resign his Viceroyalty in such a contingency. That was bunkum. Lord Willingdon is not so thin-skinned.

CHAPTER VI.

THE EDUCATED AGITATOR.

Judge not according to the appearance—

St. John, Chapter VII.

Render to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

*St. Paul : Epistle to the Romans,
Chapter XIII.*

The educated agitators are the anathema-maranatha of the superannuated bureaucrat. Sir Michael O'Dwyer has been "digging the grave of British rule in India" * in the columns of the *Daily Mail*. Lord Meston, the shrewd Scotsman, lacks the fiery Irishman's vehemence which alone must be held responsible for the O'Dwyerian description of Gandhi as a fraud and an impostor. What is lacking in venom adds to the vigour of Lord Meston's repudiation of the claims of the advance school. His dignity and suaive manner of expression increase the strength of his opposition. His is the group of thinkers and retired satraps who keep their heads cool and exercise the restraint due to their position as once responsible rulers—with a number of friends and admirers still in the land which they had served—whose arguments appeal to the British public, generally ill-informed on Indian questions.

That no serious attempt is made by Indians to combat the propaganda of our critics and opponents, is the mistake of Indians themselves. The more

*The quotation was the title of his sensational article with flaming streamers.

pessimistic of them feel that England is 'doped' and no amount of propaganda can be of any use there. The work in India alone, in their opinion, counts. When that work bears fruit, they feel that England will begin to find that "something is rotten in the state of Denmark." The pessimists, therefore, have no use for British propaganda. But the Moderates have no reason to leave out this essential part of their political duty. That they have neglected it is a deplorable fact. By this neglect they have allowed judgment to do by default.

The views expressed by the retired officers and officials present only one side of the picture. There is another side to it. It is well that that side is also presented. One must have no hesitation to own what is true, while one must combat what is untrue.

In his forceful and eloquent style, Lord Meston paints a picture of the Indian situation :—

"The crisis in India develops according to standard pattern. In methods and design it is exactly like previous crises. It differs from them only in degree, and in the fact that each successive demonstration of the kind gets bolder and more provocative. Complex though the position has become, the key to it is simple. There exists in India, as cannot be too gravely or too often insisted upon, a section of Hinduism—able, insidious and powerful—*which will never be reconciled to British control.* No political concessions will appease it, no compromise will abate its demands. It has no use for our ideas of democracy; it detests the whole scheme of Western civilisation; it hankers after the restoration of its own ancient rule of life, its own social structure, its own methods of government. It survived and absorbed the reforming faith of,

Buddha ; it survived and defeated its Moslem conquerors ; it believes that it can survive and eradicate British rule. Its strength lies in the fears and superstitions of the millions ; it makes an appeal to the people with which we cannot cope. To achieve its ends there is no agency which it hesitates to employ, directly or indirectly—the product of our English public schools, like Mr. Jawahar Lal Nehru ; the ascetic dreamer, like Mr. Gandhi ; the criminals of the underworld, like the would-be wreckers of the Viceroy's train. They all serve the Motherland."

The facts in the above observation must be fully explained and the fiction candidly exposed. The manner in which every crisis in India, every successive demonstration is more baffling and challenging, more bold and "provocative" than the previous crisis or demonstration is an absolute fact. That fact has not been peculiar to India. Every country which has struggled to throw away the "foreign yoke" had followed that line.

Take for instance the case of Ireland. Go through the period of Irish revolt in this century—leaving out the struggles of the last century which impressed the veteran Gladstone. What do we find after the Liberal victory of 1906 ? A conciliatory policy was adopted by Britain towards Ireland. The suspension of the Arms Act was the first outcome of the atmosphere of calm which the advent of Liberalism to power encouraged in Ireland. Speaking at Halifax on April 26, 1907, Mr. Augustine Birrel, the Chief Secretary, described the Irish situation thus : "You may take my word for it, that Ireland is at this moment in a more peaceful condition than she has been in for the last six hundred years."

That atmosphere of calm, however, could not be permanent. Beneath that peaceful surface, strong

currents were at work. The crisis that followed three years later was not so dangerous as a later crisis which brought Mr. deValera to the front.

"There were in 1910," says a competent observer, "other organized forces at work in Ireland, which were destined to cut across the traditional lines of political and religious cleavage. At this time the Labour movement became organized with the foundation of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union under the leadership of James Larkin, a fiery and somewhat irresponsible demagogue and James Connolly, a man of genius and character, who had founded the Irish Socialist Republican Party in 1896 and in 1910 returned from America inspired with a burning resentment at the intolerable condition of life to which Irish working people were too often subjected. This labour movement, of which the centre was established in Liberty Hall, Dublin, also threw itself into opposition to the official nationalists, its spokesmen pointing out that it was precisely influential Nationalist members of the Dublin Corporation who were responsible for the condition of the city slums by which they profited.Equally opposed to the official Nationalists was another organization which, among other and very divergent objects, also aimed at the general improvement of social and industrial conditions in Ireland—the Association known as Sinn Fein (Ourselves Alone)..... The Sinn Fein organisation was still in its weak beginnings in 1910."*

We need not trace the growth of the Sinn Fein, because it is familiar history.

Five years later, in 1915, we read: "Throughout 1915 and the early months of 1916 the police continued to warn the Government of the dangerous character

*The Revolution in Ireland: Pp. 54 & 55. By W. Alison Phillips.

of the Sinn Fein agitation. At a meeting of the Council of the Irish volunteers on 30th May, 1915, a resolution moved by Mr. Bulmer Hobson, in favour of an immediate rising had only been defeated by the casting vote of the Chairman."

Later on we read: "The organization of the terror in Ireland proceeded apace during the year 1919. The Republican Army (I. R. A.) was supplied with arms partly by numerous raids on private houses, partly by the overwhelming of small parties of police and of soldiers....." ¹

The Indian National Congress was opposed to Independence and Terror—though in regard to Bengal Congress, official opinion differed. Independence it has made as the goal of its policy. By a majority—a narrow majority—Gandhi succeeded in defeating those who stood for terror at the Karachi session of the Congress when he moved the test resolution which condemned the revolutionary attempt to wreck the Viceroy's Special. Judging, however, from the past history of revolutionary terrorism in Bengal,² some have no doubt, if Gandhi's restraining hand had been removed and influence diminished, what was confined to one Province would have spread over other parts of the country. That would have been a sad day for India. Terror is neither India's nor Britain's friend. It begins as a friend of Nationalism and ends by cutting its throat and bringing in anarchy, red ruin. Revolution devours its leaders.

The educated agitators owe their agitation to education. They agitate against British rule and prepare a fight just as Englishmen would have done were

¹ Ibid. P. 166.

² This is described in detail in an official publication called the *Sedition Committee Report* of 1918.

England under Chinese rule. Of these educated agitators, Lord Meston says :

"In their hearts, revolution is the last thing the Swarajists want, and Independence they know they could never maintain if they got it. But their purpose is to bewilder, if not intimidate, us and to whip up an agitation in the country which will make government impossible. In their plans to paralyse our administration they have a variety of weapons—boycott, civil disobedience, violence—wherever half-witted tools are available, armies of martyrs which the prisons cannot contain."

Lord Meston is perfectly correct in saying "In their hearts, the Swarajist politicians do not desire revolution." The Swarajist leader—the late Pundit Motilal Nehru, who was a member of the Minto-Morley Reformed Council in the United Provinces, when Lord Meston was its Governor, was never made of the stuff of which revolutionaries are made. In those days the Swarajist leader was a favourite of the Government House. The late Pundit's outlook then was that of a sound constitutionalist. At the Surat Congress, about three decades ago, he opposed Tilak while seconding the motion of the late Sir Surendranath Bannerjee, the Bengal leader proposing Sir Rash Behari Ghose to the Congress chair. Until Sir Michael O'Dwyer's "strong" rule in the Punjab, the Swarajist leader of Allahabad and Moderate Congressmen of his way of thinking were thoroughgoing 'Sahibs' who believed not only in British connection but Anglicizing the life and outlook of the nation. "I owe everything that I have got to English education," truly felt the great Swarajist leader once—though the same personality later on was warmly preaching the boycott of the English schools, of which his son is a brilliant

product, and the Indian schools in which English was taught, because he contended they manufactured not men but slaves! All this, said the Pundit, might seem to the ordinary British readers fantastic. But, he argued, if only they could imagine the absurdity of the students of Oxford and Cambridge being taught their history in Chinese written by Chinamen if England were under Chinese rule, they would at once realize that it was the most natural thing for an Indian to resent being Anglicized. But even though the Swarajists of which class the leader of Allahabad was a perfect model had cultivated a general resentment towards everything English—the last thing that they wanted was a revolution. The Swarajist likes the career of a politician. Like the Indian Moderate—from whom the Swarajist differs more as a trenchant critic of the Government—he loves a career in the legislature. Hence the halting, hesitating manner in which even the loudest of the Swarajists were responding to the appeal of the Indian National Congress calling on them to resign their seats in the Indian Legislatures, Central and Provincial. Hence their desire to find some excuse or other to stick to the legislature rather than go hunting tigers with Gandhi in the jungles of civil disobedience. Hence their eagerness to return to sheltered paths of constitutionalism.

Lord Meston is, however, optimistic when he says that the Swarajists in their hearts know that they could never maintain independence if they got it. The Swarajists—whether they can maintain independence or not—want it. They feel that British rule in India is foreign. Bryce wrote in 1883: "The English Government is still practically a foreign Government. It seems to them (the Irish) an external power set in motion by forces they do not control, conducted on principles which may or may not be good, but

which are not their principles." * If that was what the Irish felt, say the Swarajists, there could be nothing strange if they looked upon British rule in their country as foreign. If the Moderates ask for Dominion Status, it is because some of them fear that Britain will not be prepared to think of granting India independence. Others think independence may substitute for British connexion either Japanese connexion or Turkish connexion or both. If some Extremists prepare for a struggle for Independence, it is because they feel that Britain will not grant Dominion Status in the sense in which it is understood by the Dominions and implied in their present existing right to separate from the Mother-country if they choose. The British die-hard apprehended that if India gets Dominion Status, she will naturally regard herself as an Independent country. She will have her army, her navy and aspire to live like the United States of America in a world of her own. Extremes meet. Some of our Extremists think Monroe Doctrine will suit India's genius the most. India has lived for ages like an oyster in its shell. She has been drawn into the mid-currents of the modern world by British connexion. She will like to go back to her shell, the moment that connexion is severed.

England must be prepared for a voluntary severance of that connexion—even though it might cost her dear, says the Idealist, because the thousands of Englishmen employed in India in the Army and the Civil Services will find their occupation gone. All their places will have been taken by the Indians. The middle-class, educated, unemployed Indians who swell the Congress ranks feel that they are denied the same opportunities in their own country that the Englishmen enjoy in England.

*Bryce, *Century Magazine*, June 1883.

The argument that is generally used by the anti-Indian campaigners in the British press and platform is that the Englishman belongs to a superior race, has superior character and calibre and is naturally entitled to govern India and dominate India's services, both military and civil. It is generally believed by British pessimists that England has been beaten in the race by the United States of America; and that Germany is fast attaining to the position of supremacy which was hers before the war in the industrial and commercial world. Even as a joke—as in Bernard Shaw's "Apple Cart" Britain does not seriously contemplate coming under the sway of her American "superiors." The average Briton, who generally takes a cheerful view like our own peasants, thinks that his superiority is still unbeaten and can never be beaten.

Ask a tiller of the soil in India to give up his traditional ploughshare for the modern machine, he simply will not. With a pair of oxen and his primitive ploughshare he has been challenging modern science. The peasant's faith is infectious. Even an educated man like Gandhi, once a practising barrister, succumbed to the superior faith of the Indian village weaver whose handloom can defy the modern world. The village handloom has survived the onslaught of science and modern competition.

What will the Congress do if it enters the Legislatures?

It will start by repeating old slogans such as India has an individuality, a genius of her own. England has made no serious effort to give Indians an opportunity of developing it. England has deprived India's sons of the right of carrying arms under an Arms Act which has "virtually emasculated" the people since unaccustomed to the use of arms. England followed

a policy of officering the Indian army with Englishmen instead of Indians.

In a speech at Holloway, in June 1885, Mr. Chamberlain said: "The English system in Ireland is founded on the bayonets of 30,000 soldiers, encamped permanently as in a hostile country."* The British army in India will, says the Congressman, as he has said before, is maintained in order to keep India under British sway for all time to come—otherwise she would have made an attempt rapidly to Indianize the Army within the last 100 years of her rule in India.

The Congress line of attack will be like this: The excuse of the British irreconcilables has been that Indians have not shown adequate capacity to become officers in the Army. This is a lame excuse of course. Indians who fought the battles of England during the last war cannot be said to lack the quality necessary for an Army officer. India had her armies and officers before the British conquest of India.

A symbol of that conquest is preserved in the India Office in the shape of a Volunteers' flag which Lord Winterton, when he was Parliamentary Under-Secretary, in 1927 invited some Indian leaders, ranged on the side of Home Rule, to witness. The present writer happened to be among the gentlemen from India who accepted Lord Winterton's invitation to see the India Office Library, but he wound up our long walks through the dusty corridors of the India Office by revealing to us the heroic origin of the British Empire. "It is a lovely flag," said Lord Winterton, "don't you think it is lovely?" "Lovely, sir," said the present writer, "from your point of view. It recalls

*"Dublin Castle and the Irish People": By R. Barry O'Brien.

to your mind the great achievements of your grand adventurers. But if I may say so without offence, unlovely to the Indian mind, because it recalls the betrayal of their country by their ancestors."

"Yes," agreed Lord Winterton with a smile, "it is all a question of the angle of vision." His lordship is right—it is all a question of the angle of vision. Lord Winterton has a sense of humour which Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, once his opponent and critic, has begun to recognize after recent association in Joint Parliamentary Committee.

"With political reasoning or controversy," says Lord Meston, the educated agitators "will have no truck. It would only in their own phrase 'rivet Britain's fetters' upon them; in other words, any genuine advance towards free institutions would weaken their hold upon the ignorant masses. They rejected the Morley-Minto reform within a few months of its inception. They tossed aside the generous advance of 1919 almost before it was published. They boycotted Sir John Simon's inquiry. Lord Irwin's well-meant gesture of friendliness was thrown away upon them. There is no peace in their hearts."

It is too stale for Lord Meston to say that India's opposition to the Morley-Minto reforms, the Simon Commission or the Irwin proclamation was due to the fear of her politicians that "any genuine advance towards free institutions would weaken their hold on the ignorant." The opposition, on the contrary, was hitherto based on the fact that there had been no genuine advance towards democracy, that the responsibility of Britain for the administration of India had not been transferred from the British to the Indian shoulders. There will be continued effort through the

Legislatures to complete this transfer begun by the White Paper. Civil disobedience will be put down by the Indian Governments of the future though it is not likely to be revived in a hurry.

Why in the name of commonsense, asks the Congressman, should the Government have declined to accept the recommendations of the All-Parties Report that adult franchise be introduced in India? This report was a joint production of the leading representatives of all the advanced political parties in India who had boycotted the Commission of Enquiry. This report wanted the extension of franchise to the masses including the so-called untouchables. If adult franchise is introduced in India, it is not the politicians who will hold the masses. It will be the masses who will make and unmake political leaders and members of Parliament. The Government of India had not viewed with approval at any time the advent of the masses into the Congress. They probably thought the Lothian report enfranchising millions went too far. Many conservative Indians share their view.

A word must be said, why the Morley-Minto reforms, the so-called 'generous' advance of 1919, and the Simon Commission of Enquiry were not accepted by Indians as the last word on reforms or reconstruction? The Morley-Minto reforms did not introduce anything like democracy in India. The essential principle of a democracy is that the Government must fall when the people's representatives censure it. A party with the largest majority or the largest single group or a combination of groups which outnumber the opposition or the largest minority which successfully plays one opposition minority against the other, must take up office failing which there should be a general election. In India, under the Morley-

Minto reforms, advisory councils were introduced whose advice the Government could ignore with impunity. The so-called 'generous' advance of 1919 introduced a fairly wider electorate but their representatives in the Legislatures in the Provinces and at the Centre were ordained to face an election once in three years whereas the Government themselves had no constituency or election to face. Non-official majorities in the Provincial Councils and the Central Legislative Assembly could censure the Government—and they did censure the Government on several occasions and on several important issues—but the Government carried on the administration and were under the constitution entitled to carry on the administration as if nothing had happened.

Under the Reforms scheme of the late Edwin Montagu the Government of India still continued to be a permanent item free from the worries of a general election and free to treat with indifference an opposition which had no permanence. It would have been much better to have a permanently elected opposition and a permanently nominated Government than the present farce of a permanent Government whose constituency is the British Cabinet and a temporary opposition running every chance of being discredited at the general election every three years because they have had no power to enforce a programme or policy. Instead of covering themselves with discredit, they denounced Government for having ignored their advice, put their resolutions into the waste-paper basket, and carried on the administration as it deemed fit and not according to the advice of the chosen representatives of the people. Under the White Paper Scheme democracy is ushered into existence, however defective the transitional safeguards and special

powers which will disappear if Ministerial character and wisdom will assert.

As for the boycott of the Simon Commission Lord Meston ought to know that Indians including eminent Moderates like Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru (now Right Honourable) who had once held high official position boycotted it, because the Government of Great Britain, decided to exclude Indians from that Commission. Since the establishment of British rule in India, no Indian Commission of any consequence excluded Indians from it. But probably listening to the advice of the ex-Viceroy Lord Reading—who had curiously enough been taking an illiberal attitude towards India which, as the writer knew in London at the time, was causing no little surprise to the Liberals themselves and most certainly to the Socialists—Lord Birkenhead—with the best intention in the world and not without a clear conception of the risk he was taking—deliberately omitted the appointment of Indians to the Royal Commission of Enquiry into Indian Reforms. It is now the cheap talk of all parties in Britain and India that the exclusion of Indians was a blunder. The Round Table Conference was offered to Indians by the Socialist Government and the Conservative Viceroy, it must be noted here, on the suggestion of the Simon Commission which in itself represented all the three parties in British politics. Lord Birkenhead sent a Commission to India by deliberately excluding Indians from it to see whether the Indian problem was quite as serious as the Irish problem. He had opposed Irish Home Rule all his life, but, as Mr. Lloyd George told the writer in 1927, Lord Birkenhead played a big part in settling it. He had “nothing to go back upon in regard to India,” added Lloyd George. Subsequent Governments gave Lord Birkenhead’s idea the appearance of an *amende honourable* for the mistake of

having excluded Indians from their legitimate right of having a say in the matter of shaping their country's fate and future.

As for the rejection of Lord Irwin's proclamation of Dominion Status by the Congress 'irreconcilables,' as Lord Meston calls them, it was wholly with a view to making Britain reconcile herself to India's right to self-determination. This right, the Irwin proclamation denied. It also denied any idea of an immediate grant of Dominion Status. It was founded on the Montagu announcement of 1917. It embodied the preamble of the Government of India Act of 1919 according to which Britain—and not India—was the sole judge of the time and measure of the advance towards democracy which India was to make from stage to stage.

This programme of Swaraj in stages leaves the Indian Congress cold. What it demanded was a Home Rule programme and a regular policy of Home Rule, including the rapid Indianization of the army. Loudly it declared that the politicians of Britain were only fooling the Indian people with showy reforms retaining the reality of power in the hands of the British executive.

The Congress decided to embark on a career of independence and propagate the gospel of self-help. To those who said that the Congress had acted rashly, the Congress answer was: "Can those who say that the Congress has been rash deny that the British Government has been too reluctant to part with power and has not yet shown any readiness to transfer the real control of India's destinies from Whitehall to a Government elected by and responsible to the people of India."

As for the White Paper Scheme which they

call "a huge camouflage," it has at any rate attracted them to the Legislatures.

The problem of bringing the Army in India under the control of the Indian Parliament of a self-governing India which is not granted in the White Paper Scheme, will loom large. It is, however, the most difficult in the sense that its solution will meet with the stoutest opposition from the Conservatives, Liberals and Labour.

Lord Winterton once told the writer that he could not think of a day when the Indian Government consisting of Indians and responsible to India would be endowed with the same powers which the Colonies and Dominions have in regard to the Army. He could only think of giving India autonomy in Civil affairs such as Rhodesia enjoyed.

The Central Legislatures of the future will ring with the cry that Indianization of the Army "is the crux of the question of Dominion Status." The Congressmen will say, if Dominion Status is the goal of British policy, the British Government must boldly face this essential task of "Indianizing the Army," to use an ugly, if popular phrase, by which is generally meant the withdrawal of the British garrison as it was withdrawn from the Colonies and the Dominions to achieve which a rapid substitution must be begun from now onwards of the British officers in the Indian Army by Indian officers. The Congress will urge that the recruitment of British officers for the Indian Army must stop and a Military College should be established in every province in India the products of which will begin steadily to replace the European officers from the bottom.

Even this process will take another twenty-five years before anything like complete Indianization of

the army could be reached. In this demand, the Extremists and the Moderates are united. It is this union of the temperate and the violent politicians which makes Lord Meston write as follows:—

“Of the more moderate Nationalists who call themselves Liberals it is difficult to speak with assurance. They are lacking in organisation and discipline. Among them are plenty of sincere patriots who would gladly see an honourable settlement of the constitutional problem. But they complain that we have not supported or sufficiently trusted them, and that we make concessions to extremist violence which we refuse to their own moderation. *The truth is that, while they deplore the extremist tactics, they accept the extremist goal, and they are hard put to it to resist the social pressure which the extremists apply. Whether in the last resort they will make common cause with us against extremism will be a matter (to use the word in no offensive sense) of bargaining; and whether the terms of the bargain would, from our point of view, be unduly onerous will be seen at the Round Table Conference on the Simon Report. The Moderates have not yet announced their acceptance of the Indian Committee's recommendations, which certainly go as far in removing British control as most of us would consider safe.*”

It is perfectly true that the Moderates are open to bargaining.

But they will certainly insist on a time-table of progress as they did at the Round Table Conference lest the progress should be too slow.

The Indian Central Committee whose recommendations Lord Meston considers ‘safe’ demand the introduction of a provincial militia for the Provinces.

The militia is, of course, an ancient institution. It has no place in a modern army. The originator of that idea was John Bright. Writing in "India in the Crucible" * long before the Central Committee reported, the author observed :

"Provincial autonomy will be reduced to a mockery without provision for self-defence. This takes us back to the farsighted advice of John Bright in regard to military defence. *No Provincial autonomy will be complete without a Provincial militia for the internal security of the Provinces controlled by the Provinces themselves.*"

It is satisfactory that the Indian Central Committee, of which the late Sir Sankaran Nair was the guiding spirit, have made the above suggestion their own and that Lord Meston considers their report as 'safe.' The above suggestion can be treated as a half-way house arrangement between the complete control of the Army by the Central Legislature and the present state. The provincial army may be treated as purely Indian, managed and controlled by Indians. In the transitional period, while the Indian army may be controlled by the Indian Parliament, half the number of officers in it may be Europeans, though the process of their elimination, the Congress opposition will insist, must be rapidly and resolutely carried out.

If the British Government is not prepared to follow a policy of rapid preparation of India for Dominion Status, the Congress will create fresh trouble and the press will become severe in its tone. In Lord Meston's words :

"There are certain mistakes which in this country we must avoid. One is the frequent tendency to

* "India in the Crucible." P. 265. By C. S. Ranga Iyer (Selwyn and Blount).

under-estimate the Extremists, because they are few, unrepresentative, and divided among themselves. All this, in a sense, is true, but they have the gift of reuniting against the Government; they also have, by their energy and their vehemence, an influence with the populace which is out of all proportion to their numbers." *

The Extremists will also find, the moment the Congress accepts office, which it cannot avoid under Provincial autonomy if it secures majorities in the Councils, that it cannot live by fire-works and slogans alone.

The best solution of the Army problem rests with the future Provincial Governments. If communal rancour yields place to fraternal cordiality, the "Indianization" of the army will be easy. But if 'Indianization' means Communalization, rationally-minded leaders of the future will approach the problem with caution. While insisting on their progress, they will not be rash or extreme. Once the communal spirit enters the Army, India as a free Nation will become a nightmare.

* *The Sunday Times*, January 5, 1930.

CHAPTER VII

REPRESSION.

Each petty hand

Can steer a ship becalm'd; but he that will
Govern and carry her to her ends, must know
His tides, his currents; how to shift his sails;
What she will bear in foul, what in fair weather;
What her springs are, her leaks, and how to stop them;
The forces and the natures of all winds,
Gusts, storms and tempests; when her keel ploughs
hell,
And deck knocks heaven; then to manage her
Becomes the name and office of a pilot.

Ben Jonson.—CATALINE.

Were Lord Winterton the pilot at the India Office—and not Mr. Wedgwood Benn, the Socialist Secretary for India—his lordship gave an idea as to how he would have performed his task, when the Socialists fell from power.

Sir Samuel Hoare and Lord Willingdon have proved far stronger than Mr. Benn and Lord Irwin.

Writing to the *Sunday Times*, of January 12, 1930, Lord Winterton expressed the opinion that whatever the detractors of the late administration at the India Office might say to the contrary, the official policy of the Conservative Party had been "the policy of the middle of the road." That policy is briefly explained in his own words:

"Whenever serious events occur in the great peninsula, the small proportion of British public opinion which is vocal on the subject of India

tends to divide into two extreme points of view. The one, directly or by inference, suggests that all further attempts at self-government in India should be abandoned; the other urges that at all costs "repression" should be avoided. The first point of view proceeds from demonstrably false promises; it is morally impossible to evade the pledge contained in the Declaration of 1917, and the practical result of a breach of faith by Great Britain in the East is always disastrous; the second point of view is based on an inability to understand that failure to repress and punish by every legitimate means incitements to violence and murder in India are tantamount to the condonation of crime, since public opinion East of Suez is too weak and unformed of itself to discourage and prevent illegal violence."

No constitutionalist will deny that incitements to violence should be punished by every legitimate means. Lord Winterton is, however, wrong when he says that "public opinion East of Suez is too weak and unformed of itself to discourage and prevent illegal violence." Ireland, as Lord Winterton ought to know, does not lie East of Suez! Public opinion in Ireland was neither 'weak' nor 'unformed.' Yet Ireland resorted to violence in its attempt to overthrow English rule in that country. A section of public opinion supported violence in India for the same reason as in Ireland before the 1921 settlement.

While a strong and powerful section in India no doubt supported violence, the outstanding fact in the Indian situation was that a Congressman of Gandhi's towering eminence was and is strongly and honestly opposed to it. If there was any public opinion worthy of serious attention in India, it was that which Gandhi represented. Gandhi's policy of "the middle road"

was to agitate for independence but avoid violence even as Lord Winterton's plan appeared to be to go forward with reforms and repression.

The Conservative campaign, it is interesting to note, was directed not only against violence but also against non-violence. Lord Winterton, the Conservative spokesman, specially advocated the imprisonment of Gandhi :

"It is essential that public opinion here should be vigilant in demanding prompt action to prevent a recurrence of the events of 1919—1921 in India. They can be prevented.

"In the period in question, at the height of non-co-operation, an intolerable strain was put, not only upon European officials, but upon the thousands of loyal Indians in the service of Government. In some ways the latter suffered most, for, whereas Europeans were subjected to public abuse and contumely, they had to face the subtle but persistent social and religious bias against connection with the Government, which existed at the time in a greater degree than ever before or since.

"Before Gandhi's arrest and the consequent collapse of the movement, it is probable that millions of cultivators were impressed with the idea that the British Raj had been superseded by the Gandhi Raj; solely concerned, as most of them were and are, by the preservation of their own small interests, they decided that they would best serve those interests by acclaiming the new rulers. The Government found itself confronted with the greatest danger to its continuance since the Mutiny.

"Though I was not in office at the time, I held office sufficiently soon after these events to make

it proper to write about them with restraint. This, however, may be said without indiscretion because the facts were patent to all India at the time. An Englishman, holding high official position in India, acted with the decisive courage which he has always displayed in time of crisis, and, in the exercise of his undoubted legal powers, arrested Mr. Gandhi. Other high authorities, who previously had had equal opportunities and justification for taking this step, refrained for reasons which, presumably, they held to be sufficient: I think history will commend the former and condemn the latter.

"None of the evils which hyper-sentimentalists at home and abroad believed would follow from attacking the sacred person of Mr. Gandhi in fact occurred; the reverse was the case. "Not a dog barked" in all India.

"The present Administrations in Whitehall and Delhi, if, as is likely, they should in 1930 be confronted with the same beginnings of revolution as were their predecessors in 1919 to 1921, have in the contrasting policies of the anonymous High Authorities to whom reference has been made a golden example of which to follow and which to eschew."

The anonymous High Authority was none other than Lord (then Sir) George Lloyd, the Governor of Bombay at the time.

The Socialist Government's policy appeared to be different from that of Lord Lloyd. They forced him to resign his position as High Commissioner of Egypt. They had the support of the Liberal Party in withdrawing Lord Lloyd from Egypt. His 'strong' policy in India no doubt resulted in the arrest of Gandhi after his suspension of the first non-co-

operation movement. When Gandhi was leading the movement, the Government of Lord Reading were following a policy of 'wait and see.' Sir George Lloyd was getting impatient. Gandhi had his headquarters in Bombay. It was the Bombay Government which had to bear the brunt of Gandhi's propaganda. Lord Lloyd, it was said, had even once gone the length of tendering his resignation, because Lord Reading the Viceroy—no doubt a more experienced administrator with the Jewish imagination of an oriental to look far ahead before embarking upon a course of action—followed the policy of giving Gandhi a long rope. Gandhi swore by non-violence. Lord Reading probably thought a non-violent campaign—however awful was nevertheless constitutional and legitimate.

The ex-Lord Chief Justice was not first disposed to exercise the undoubted authority of the Government to use special powers or resort to special legislation to repress Gandhi and non-co-operation. The Viceroy once sent for Gandhi and told him that he had no intention to tamper with his movement—except in cases of incitements to violence. The Viceroy had no doubt that Gandhi's motives were clean and desire to keep his movement from the taint of violence genuine. But the Viceroy urged that one of Gandhi's right-hand men Mr. Mohammed Ali, a gifted and brilliant product of Oxford, the leader of the Khilafat, had preached violence in one of his speeches in Erode. This was before the notorious Mopla rebellion. His Excellency would have had to prosecute Mr. Mohammed Ali if Gandhi would not induce him to express regrets and publicly apologize to the Government. Mr. Mohammed Ali apologized. The Gandhi movement progressed from non-violence to non-violence. Public feelings ran high. The disgust for Britain had reached the highwater mark. Alas! a

number of Gandhiites let themselves go. They violated their Master's preachings. They went mad at Chauri Chura where they burnt policemen alive and drowned his movement in blood.

Gandhi repented. By way of practical penance, he suspended the non-co-operation movement. He laid down the arms. He publicly declared he was going to purge his movement of all those who had harboured violence in their hearts. He hoped to revive his movement after this purge, wholly on non-violent lines.

The Government of Lord Reading knew that the time had come to arrest Gandhi. It is rhetorical for Lord Winterton to say that "no dog barked." No, the dogs which were only barking hitherto began to bite! The revolutionaries of Bengal emerged from underground. During the last Civil Disobedience Movement, benefitting by old experience, the Government of Lord Willingdon attacked Gandhi and revolutionary alike.

Lord Olivier, the Secretary of State for India in the first Labour Government, considered that the situation had become so dangerous that a policy of repression should be enforced in Bengal. As it was difficult to prove any one guilty for seditious speeches—because the revolutionary does not bark, he only bites—the Socialist Government sanctioned Lord Reading's request to promulgate a special Ordinance for Bengal. Further the Socialist Secretary of State sanctioned the use of the Bengal Regulation III of 1818 under which the Government of India had the right to intern anybody in India without a trial for an indefinite period.

Another result of Gandhi's arrest and imprisonment was the militant campaign of the Swarajists to

capture the Councils and follow a policy of obstruction with a view to paralysing the Government. Finding the situation had become more bearable the Government released Gandhi who had been operated upon for appendicitis, three years before the expiry of the full period of his incarceration.

The Socialist Administration in Whitehall followed Lord Winterton's advice. Gandhi and his numerous followers were arrested. "But unless we are shot, how can repression succeed" that was the challenging spirit of the jail-going crowd.

How could they be shot, when they were only preaching non-violent resistance to the Government? Lord Winterton did not advocate "the Amritsar policy."* His lordship only wanted the arrest of Gandhi and the Congress people. But arrests ceased to create terror in the hearts of the people. "The villagers are so down and out that they will much rather go to the prisons where they are sure of two hearty meals, whereas they do not know outside the prison what a full meal is"—that was the hope of the Congress.

The shooting in Amritsar brought in its train the non-co-operation movement. The imprisonment-policy created the Swarajist revolt in the Councils. Englishmen began to realise the truth that England could not put down a nation in revolt. She will have to surrender later on as she surrendered to Ireland.

If the Government had accepted the verdict of the Irish elections of 1918 and made it the excuse for taking the line which it adopted in 1921, it would have spared Ireland much of the bloodshed and misery and itself the ignominy of the years that

*The Hunter Commission Report.

followed. The *Times* and other organs of opinion in England were urging this course; and indeed it is difficult to see what objections there were to it that were not equally valid three years later."* Lord Winterton presumably did not think like that. In his judgment, Birrelism dug the grave of British rule in Ireland even as the Rothermere Press thinks that Lord Irwin and Mr. Baldwin dug the grave of British rule in India.

The words of Lord Winterton on the Irish story and of an organ of the Rothermere Press may be quoted.

Says Lord Winterton:—

"Only those who lived in Southern Ireland, or (as I was) were in Parliament from 1906 onwards, can realise the extent to which Mr. Birrel's lamentable weakness in dealing with agrarian violence and crime contributed to the disintegration, in later years, of the whole machinery of Government in Ireland."

Says the *Sunday Dispatch*:—

"Swift and serious have been the consequences of the 'crowning blunder' that Mr. Baldwin made last summer.

As a direct result of his failure to realise what he was doing, India—or, at least, the noisy fanatics who pretend to speak in the name of that vast and complex sub-continent—has demanded full independence and proclaimed open rebellion against British rule.

*"The Revolution in Ireland." By W. Alison Phillips. P. 246.

For this new peril the Empire has to thank not only the timid policy of a feeble Viceroy and the sloppy sentimentality of Socialist Ministers who are totally ignorant of the character and conditions of the East. It is directly due also to the complacent incapacity of Mr. Baldwin."

Both Lord Winterton and the *Sunday Dispatch* are wrong. It is better for an Englishman like Lord Winterton, or an English newspaper like the *Dispatch* to admit Britain's continued failure in India as in Ireland. It is easy for Lord Winterton to chide Birrel or for the *Dispatch* to rebuke Lord Irwin and Mr. Baldwin. Lord Winterton himself is loyal to his Chief, Mr. Baldwin, however much he might have shaken his head when Lord Irwin made his Dominion Status declaration.

The appeal to 'stern oppression's iron grip' may prevail for a while. But, wrote the Congress papers, the questions that the advocates of repression have to answer are: Will England be morally justified in governing a nation which does not want her rule, with all her 'strength'? Is a giant justified in abusing his strength that Providence has endowed him with? The British answer was: Repression was kind. It was given in the name of the masses.

Whether repression temporarily succeeds or not India had faith in her great and mighty future. English educated Indians felt they would be false to their education if they did not believe in their Nation's freedom. The immortal song of the poet—

Liberty, the chartered right of Englishmen,
Won by our fathers in many a glorious field
inspired the brave Indian people who would not rest

until Britain saw India with the eye of the poet. Lord Irwin did not want, he frankly owned, to produce 'a desert.' What India wanted was an honourable settlement, the pursuit of which no repression could kill. Whether they admit it or not, speaking for the wiser, and sadder men, the Congress purpose in Council entry is to use the Hoare reforms as a stepping stone for a permanent settlement.

CHAPTER VIII

AN IMPERIAL SENTINEL

"Suit the action to the word, the word to the action."

SHAKESPEARE :—*Hamlet*.

"That which the world miscalls a jail
A private closet is to me,
Whilst a good conscience is my bail,
And innocence my liberty;
Locks, bars, and solitude, together set,
Make me no prisoner, but an anchorite."

LORD ARTHUR CAPEL.—*Written in confinement*.

When the writer was in England in 1929, the Right Honourable D. Lloyd George sounded like the sentinel of British Imperialism in the East, the warning: Everything is not as it should be. Matters are going from bad to worse. If the man-on-the-spot and the men-at-the-helm, if Whitehall and Delhi are to sit with folded arms and watch the growing crisis in India and the ever-increasing power of Gandhi with a helplessness that ill-becomes the Government of an Imperial race, then it will be time for the British public to be stirred and Parliament to be spurred. For the present a warning must prove sufficient alike to Mr. Wedgwood Benn and Lord Irwin. It was their blunder and the generous attitude of an English gentleman—Mr. Baldwin—that produced, in the opinion of the Welsh Wizard, a first class crisis in India.*

That there was a first class crisis here nobody could deny. But who created that crisis? Was

*"Jerry Building for a Crash in India." By the Rt. Hon. Lloyd George in the *Daily Mail* of January 13, 1930.

that a new crisis? How could the crisis be tided over? These three questions have been differently answered by different people. It is useful to see how the Great Welshman answered them and how far his answers were correct.

Mr. Lloyd George appeared to think like the *Daily Mail* that the crisis had its origin in the lack of statesmanship of Mr. Benn, the Secretary for India, the miscalculation of Lord Irwin and the blundering sympathy of the Conservative leader Mr. Baldwin. Mr. Lloyd George recalled that Mr. Benn was never regarded, when he was his follower in the Liberal camp, as 'anything better than an agile lightweight.' While nimble in dealing with small points of Parliamentary debating, 'he never showed any symptoms of constructive ability.' In the opinion of his former Chief, the Socialist Secretary had been but a 'skirmisher;' 'an apt and adroit slinger of small stones.' He is not the man for the India Office. He is 'jumpy and excitable'—without the excuse of youth. Mr. Lloyd George was not surprised that Benn blundered. He was a born blunderer!

But the originator of the mischievous declaration of Dominion Status, Mr. Lloyd George forgets, was not Benn but the Conservative Viceroy—the man-on-the-spot who ought to have known better than the busy bodies in Westminster. Mr. Lloyd George avoided severe criticism of Lord Irwin, because "he has only just escaped a violent death at the hands of assassins. The Congress which he went out of his way to conciliate came very near approving the attempt on his life. One is therefore reluctant to criticise him just now. Moreover he is not here to defend himself."

The same reluctance however did not hamper the *Daily Mail* in its obvious sense of duty to the Empire

which put the public before the private feelings towards a gentleman or an official, however exalted, in trouble, 'mostly of his making!' Commenting on Mr. Lloyd George's article in the same issue, it quoted with approval the Socialist *New Statesman* that "the present Viceroy is not the man for the job" because he is "indiscriminately conciliatory." The *Daily Mail* deplored Lord Irwin's policy thus :

"He was rash enough to go out of his way to promise Dominion Status to the Indian extremists in the hope of placating them. Their reply to his misguided overtures has been, as all the world knows, to attempt his assassination and to overwhelm him with every kind of insult and defiance."

It suggested once that Mr. Winston Churchill should be sent out to India by the Socialist Government as the Viceroy. Having made that suggestion, perhaps it could not suggest again that Mr. Lloyd George who defeated the Kaiser—though he did not carry out his promise of hanging the ex-Kaiser!—was just the man to defeat Gandhi also. No better successor of Lord Irwin there could be. And no firmer man to handle the situation. The man who won the War must also be the man to preserve the Empire from destruction in India.

This destruction which was said to have threatened Britain in India was,—Mr. Lloyd George did not disguise 'the fact' as he saw it,—the complete failure of the Viceroy to gauge the position. "He himself," said Mr. Lloyd George, "will be the first to acknowledge that he completely miscalculated the effect of his Proclamation."

Having disposed of the share of Lord Irwin and exposed the responsibility of Mr. Benn in the creation of a great crisis in India, one has only to note what

Mr. Lloyd George thought of Mr. Baldwin's part in that transaction :

" Another disturbing factor in the situation is the attitude of Mr. Baldwin towards the grant of Dominion Status. It is now known that he was personally prepared in September to assent to an early setting up of a Dominion Constitution for India provided the Commission approved of the idea.

The fatal fact in the Viceroy's plunge was that he had the full approval of the leader of the Conservative Party."*

The above diagnosis of the Indian situation by Mr. Lloyd George was full of Welsh imagination. Neither the Conservative Viceroy nor the Secretary of State nor the leader of the Conservative Party—

*Why Mr. Lloyd George of all people should have blamed Lord Irwin and Mr. Baldwin and the Labour Government passed the understanding of the *Morning Post* (January 14, 1920) which wrote:

"When the late Mr. Montagu set out on the jerry-building which is now threatening to crash, we warned not only him, but his Chief, who was responsible for his policy, namely, Mr. Lloyd George. When Mr. Montagu announced that he proposed to stir India out of its pathetic contentment, we pointed out that it was a cruel and a senseless policy.

"Our warnings were supported by every British Indian official of repute, except Lord Meston. Mr. Lloyd George took no heed; he let Mr. Montagu have his way, and it is not for him; therefore, at this late hour to try to shift the blame to the shoulders of others."

One has every sympathy with the above remarks of the *Morning Post*. If Britain did not mean to grant Dominion Status to India, she should not have endorsed the Montagu policy. Having committed herself to it, she cannot, now that Dominion Status is to be granted to India, cry, 'Help! wolf'—least of all Mr. Lloyd George!

whose love of keeping up the prestige of the Empire in the East cannot yield place to that of Lloyd George himself—could be lightly accused of provoking a crisis. They were trying to tide over a crisis as Mr. Lloyd George himself, the head of a Coalition Government, with the approval of Conservatives like Lord Birkenhead and Sir Austen Chamberlain had successfully tided it over nearer home. The tone that Mr. Lloyd George assumed towards the Secretary of State for India, the Viceroy and the leader of the Conservative Party, for inaugurating a new era and adopting a conciliatory policy in India was exactly the same as the tone of Lord Carson towards Mr. Lloyd George himself for his Irish settlement. "I speak," he said, "I can hardly speak—for all those who, relying on British honour and British justice, have, after giving their best to the service of the State, seen themselves deserted and cast aside without one single sign of recollection or recognition."*

"If," said Lord Buckmaster, referring to the Irish policy of Mr. Lloyd George's Government, "the change in view is really an act of wisdom, an act of union, an act of healing differences between the nations, why was it not introduced in 1918 after the Armistice?"†

The feelings of the loyalists of Southern Ireland were echoed in these words: "For the Great War was over; and it was therefore as safe in 1918 as in 1921 to throw over the people in Southern Ireland who had been foolish enough to stand by England in her time of trouble."

*Quoted by W. Alison Phillips in the "Revolution in Ireland." P. 246.

†*Ibid.*

Lloyd George was prepared to face all censure and public opposition of a large section of the politicians of his own country and Ulster and Southern Ireland in discharging his duties and responsibilities to Ireland to the best of his judgment. Why then should he have been ungenerous in his judgment of the Viceroy, Mr. Wedgwood Benn and Mr. Baldwin? Could he deny that the Indian situation was serious? Could he deny the strength of Gandhi? Could he again deny India's enthusiasm for Home Rule? All that he denied was that the Indian Secretary of the Labour Government should not have followed his former Chief's own policy towards Ireland, even though human nature and sentiment, in Ireland and India and the world over, are the same.

Mr. Lloyd George's glowing testimony about the influence of the Congress and Gandhi is valuable. He truly said :

"As to the influence exerted by the Congress on Indian opinion there can be no real question. Gandhi has probably a larger personal following among the masses of his countrymen than any Indian of this generation."

Nor did he doubt the ability and the earnestness of purpose of the Congress leaders :

"The Congress represent the dominant party. Its leaders are very able and resolute men. One must not therefore make the mistake of underrating either the significance or the effect of the Lahore resolutions."

The resolutions adopted by the Lahore Congress had apparently come on Mr. Lloyd George as a surprise. They had not taken the people of India or the Government of India or His Majesty's Government.

in Great Britain by surprise. The Congress issued an ultimatum on Christmas-day in 1929 that it would prepare the country for Passive Resistance if Britain would not take steps to grant Indian Dominion Home Rule. It boycotted the Simon Commission which was treated as an insult to India's fitness for Home Rule to investigate which the Commission was appointed. It rallied to its side all the Moderate and Liberal elements and produced a Home Rule scheme. If that scheme was not to be enforced by the Government, they should have introduced or agreed to draft some other scheme. The Congress was prepared to co-operate with the British Government and the progressive Liberals of India in drafting that scheme. It demanded a definite declaration of Dominion Status from the Government. It further demanded a Round Table Conference in London to give effect to that declaration. The Conference was to consist of the people's representatives and those of the British Government. Lord Irwin went to England to discuss matters with the Secretary of State for India who in his turn consulted the Opposition Leader with a view to keep India out of Party politics and promised her Dominion Status at an early stage. In the words of Mr. Lloyd George:

"The Viceroy and the British Government attached such importance to the decisions of this Congress that they issued that ill-judged declaration on Dominion Status in order to propitiate the Lahore assembly. It was their sole excuse for short-circuiting the Simon Commission."

The Dominion Status declaration made Lloyd George and an influential section of the press take up cudgels against the Tory Viceroy and the Socialist Secretary for India and the Conservative leader. A

section of the Conservative party itself was up in arms against its Chief—so much so that he had to explain his position in Parliament. According to the Congress, either Socialism was intimidated by the propaganda in England and therefore instead of calling on the Viceroy to carry out the policy of conciliation and come to terms with Gandhi, yielded to the clamour of the reactionaries and abandoned the original idea of *settling* the Indian problem at the Round Table Conference,—or the original idea was to separate the Moderates from the Extremists by a seeming pledge of early Dominion Status. Both Imperialists and Indian extremists felt that there was much force and justification in these words of Mr. Lloyd George :—

“Nothing could be worse than the duplicity which created the impression throughout India that the primary business of the Round Table Conference would be to favour a Dominion Constitution for India while at the same time the British Parliament was assured that no change of policy was contemplated.

“Who has been deceived? The fact remains that the Indian interpretation has not yet been repudiated by the Government of India, nor has the ‘no change’ declaration been withdrawn here.”

The truth is the minority Socialist Government felt that it lacked the authority to translate into actuality what the Prime Minister, Mr. MacDonald, himself knew was the barest justice to India. (The views expressed by Mr. MacDonald are purveyed in the next chapter). Either the Secretary of State should not have agreed to the Dominion Status declaration or having agreed to it, said the Indian Nationalists, he should not have surrendered to the *Daily Mail* and Mr. Lloyd George.

Gandhi met Lord Irwin and put it frankly to him whether the purpose of the Round Table Conference in Whitehall was to *draft* a Constitution of Dominion Status for India or to have an academic discussion on the Indian question. The Viceroy told him that it was neither the one nor the other but both! The utmost light that Lord Irwin could shed on the purpose of the Conference was that it would crystallize the greatest common measure of agreement. On this the Extremist comment was that the ancient oracles of Greece could not have listened to the Viceroy's equivocation except with pardonable envy!

Gandhi, predicted the Extremist press, would refuse to be exploited or weakened or discredited by walking into what appeared to them to be the net that British diplomacy had spread for him! He was urged to persist in his programme and take the consequence. He was told and began to feel likewise that India's fight for freedom knew only one end—victory.

Mr. Lloyd George suggested that the Government of India should arrest Gandhi and his followers, because Britain could never grant Dominion Status to India. He held the same opinion as Earl Russell in regard to the meaning and implications of Dominion Status though Gandhi and his adherents held a contrary view. In Lloyd George's view, Dominion Status meant independence in administrative and legislative matters to the same extent as a self-governing colony enjoyed. The fact that Dominion Status would mean the grant of a Dominion Army was the one thing to which the Liberal leader could not reconcile himself. A self-governing India would raise as the Dominions are raising an independent army. Could Britain look upon it with equanimity?

A self-governing India would send her ambassadors to all the countries of the world even as Britain is sending them. Could Britain agree to it especially as there might be the danger of a clash between the British and Indian interests ?

A self-governing India would enter into separate treaties especially to promote the Indian commerce and Indian industries. Could Britain ignore her own interests in this matter and give unfettered authority to India ?

Dominion Status, therefore, is 'a grotesque eventuality' in the considered opinion of Mr. Lloyd George. Neither the great Conservative leader Mr. Baldwin—the most upright personality in the English public life to-day—nor the Socialist leaders had expressed a view so reactionary, so unsympathetic and so unstatesmanlike.

Mr. Lloyd George himself would not have given expression to a view so impractical and impossible—impossible because one cannot impose one's rule on an unwilling nation through time to eternity—but for the capital he desired to make from a party point of view. If only in India the ordinary newspaper reader knew that Mr. Lloyd George was merely accusing the Conservative and the Labour parties from the time-honoured Party standpoint, that he himself, were he the Prime Minister, would have done much the same thing, the mischief of his outburst would not have been much. But who would take the trouble of understanding and explaining things in that light ?

The fundamental objection of Mr. Lloyd George to granting India Dominion Status is this : The moment Dominion Status is granted to her, she will at once adopt the attitude towards England of a free and Independent and probably a hostile country. The

limitations imposed on Ireland cannot work in India. Ireland is so near to Britain which is much bigger in resources and Army and Naval strength. Ireland therefore cannot lightly try conclusions with Britain if the latter interfered with the former for putting in jeopardy the Empire interests. The same cannot be expected of India which had an Empire of Asoka, of the Moghuls, of the British and which would like to have an empire of Gandhi or some saint-politician like him who could have no use for the Western civilization! Moreover Mr. deValera's policy and plans have shown that the Irish safeguards are unworkable and unsafe.

Dominion Status has no danger in the case of the Colonies because Lloyd George says, "they have accepted the principle of a whole-hearted partnership inside the Empire!" Whereas the Congress takes its stand on independence and not partnership.

Here the Indian Liberals felt that Mr. Lloyd George was simply misleading himself. When the Boer War was fought—Mr. Lloyd George's own pacifist attitude then must be in the memory of many still living—it was not with a view to remain inside the Empire but definitely to attain freedom outside. The Boers could not have inspired their people to go to war with Britain with a view to remain in the Imperial household. What they fought for was Independence. They compromised on Dominion Status.

When Michael Collins was carrying on a furious campaign against England, it was not for Dominion Status but Independence. But he was content with a Free State, and an independent Northern Ireland with a separate constitution.

Gandhi and the Congress could not inspire the thousands of Indian fire-brands from the standpoint of

sheer tactics, to rise in revolt for so insipid a thing as Dominion Status. The Indian extremist will not think it worth his while to go to prison or be willing even to face greater hardships if the goal of his suffering and sacrifice was to be a hewer of wood and drawer of water for British Imperialism.

The Indian extremist is asking—and agitating—for independence, but like the Boer or the Irishman he will be ready to accept Dominion Status. Gandhi himself lowered the flag when he signed what is known as Gandhi-Irwin pact. Of course, Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru still continued to say that India, not being a Dominion, having nothing in common either in life or religion or colour with England—will certainly go out of the Empire. Those who had put obstacles in the way of Lord Irwin—and in the way of the Socialist Government—who had unfortunately no confidence to face an election on the Indian issue—those who day after day shout in the columns of popular and powerful newspapers in England that the Indian peril must be resisted and the Indian demands negatived, are really depleting the moderates of much of their moderation.

Let there be no misunderstanding about it that there is no Indian—be he excessively loyal to Britain or reasonably opposed and friendly to her—who does not want *freedom* for his country—as distinct from *Independence*. The loyalist, the moderate and the extremist are all one in demanding the development of an Indian Army officered by Indians for the defence of India from external invasion and internal disturbances.

Take for instance the recommendations of that most Moderate body, the Indian Central Committee whose report was presented by the Secretary of State

for India to Parliament by the command of His Majesty in December 1929. This Committee which dared to cooperate with the Simon Commission in the face of opposition from the bulk of the Indian intelligentsia demanded that opportunities should be forthwith granted to India "to man the Indian portion of the Army by her own sons as a preliminary to taking the entire defence of the country into her own hands."* But Mr. Lloyd George objects to this. Which means that he objects to what the most loyal party of cooperators in India demand. "Concurrently with the establishment of responsible Government," this Committee of loyal Indians demanded, "a Military College should immediately be established in India: and that in other respects the recommendations of the Skeen Committee should be carried out in the manner referred to in that Committee's report."† Since then a Military College has been established in Dehra Dun.

Mr. Lloyd George mentions what in his view is a fundamental objection to the grant of Dominion Status to India. Would the Indian States, he asks, care to "substitute Mr. Nehru for the King-Emperor." Mr. Lloyd George cleverly omits the name of Gandhi who is more charitable and friendly to the Princes and mentions the name of his lieutenant Nehru who, as the Chairman of the Lahore Congress, attacked the Princes as survivals and relics of a forgotten past. Mr. Nehru was speaking as a Socialist who would not have the Indian Princes continue for a single day in their present irresponsible position as absolute monarchs. What the Congress wants is the substitution of the rule of autocracy in the Indian States by the spirit of democracy which animates the King's

*Report of the Indian Central Committee 1928-29. Printed and Published by His Majesty's Stationery Office. Page 69, Para 137.

†*Ibid.*

Government in England. If their King-Emperor is a constitutional monarch, the Congress argues that "it is time that his vassals ceased to be primitive despots and that their administration was broad-based on the people's will."

To the credit of the States be it said, they have begun to introduce popular reforms, however restricted in scope—the latest examples being Travancore, Baroda, Mysore and Kapurthala.

If Mr. Lloyd George would support the claims of the diehards and keep the Princes out of the self-governing India of the future, the Moderates say, that could be no excuse for his denying self-government to that territory which does not come under the jurisdiction of the Princes and for the administration of which Britain is responsible. Much water has flown down the bridges since and Federation is an irrevocable pledge. Britain means to promote it.

Confronted with a position similar to the one that confronted Britain in 1929, Mr. Asquith, the Prime Minister, paid a visit to Ireland, talked with "representative exponents of various shades and complexions of Irish opinion," "talked with the utmost freedom to a large number of those who had been arrested and detained,"* and commissioned Mr. Lloyd George on returning to England to parley with the Irish party leaders and arrive at a compromise to enable the Liberal Government to put the Government of Ireland Act into immediate operation.

Fortunately, the present British Prime Minister need not descend on India from an aeroplane to study the Indian problem, because he has already visited the country and studied it in a calmer atmosphere.

*Mr. Asquith's statement in the House of Commons on 25th May, 1916.

CHAPTER IX.

HOW TO SAVE INDIA.

Mr. MacDonald's Solution.

"Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed and some few to be chewed and digested."

BACON. *Essay*:—OF STUDIES.

In this fascinating book, *The Government of India*, Mr. J. Ramsay MacDonald made some urgent and useful suggestions some years ago which one might commend to-day to his National Government. The adoption of some of those suggestions would have gone a great way towards satisfying the bulk of the Indian intelligentsia :

The Secretary of State and his Council.

I. "The Under-Secretary should be an Indian whenever possible—indeed there is no reason why an Indian.....should not be the Secretary of State for India." (*The Government of India*, page 52).

When the late Edwin Montagu introduced the Reforms Bill in the House of Commons, he appointed the first Indian, Lord Sinha, as the Under-Secretary for India. He was raised to peerage with the express object of making him the Under-Secretary.

In the Socialist Government the Under-Secretary for India was Earl Russel and the Secretary of State Mr. Wedgwood Benn, who had never before taken any real interest in Indian affairs.

Why was the Socialist Prime Minister not prepared to accept Mr. MacDonald's view of appointing an Indian to the office of the Secretary of State for India ?

The idea of appointing an Indian as the Secretary of State is a capital one. When it is carried into effect, it will make a profound impression on the Indian people.

The India Council.

2. "The [India] Council should be abolished." (Page 52).

The India Council, however, flourishes to-day as a green-bay tree. No attempt has so far been made to abolish the India Council. The sooner it is abolished the better.

The Viceroy: His Dual Functions.

3. "The Viceroy has much opportunity of acting as autocrat.....The Viceroy should remain the representative of the Crown and be endowed with the dignity of that office. But he ought not to be the representative of the Home Government or the responsible head of the Indian administration. The President of the Council [of the Government of India] should be a separate functionary, and the Viceroy should be kept in touch with the...Indian administration...as the Crown is kept in touch with the Cabinet. That change is necessary in the interest of the Viceroy himself and in that of India and the development of responsible Government there demands that it should be made without delay." (Page 59).

Under the White Paper Scheme the Indian Viceroy will continue to act as an autocrat. He can exercise the right of over-riding the decisions of Parliament

of India by frequent resort if need be, to his special powers. He can also as now override the Legislatures by issuing an Ordinance, whenever it declines to pass a special legislation introduced by his Government. An Ordinance was passed in 1929 when the Assembly did not pass the Public Safety Bill.

An Indian Prime Minister responsible to Parliament and the people of India must be the head of the Government of India. At present the Viceroy exercises the functions of the Crown and the Prime Minister. "It is undesirable," says Mr. MacDonald, "that this union of functions should last." (Page 59).

In future, the Indian people will demand that the British Government should take steps to abolish the dual functions of the Viceroy.

The Executive Council.

3. "The Legislatures will be...the sources from which the Viceroy's Council members should be drawn." (Page 67).

So far, though in future that will not be the case, not a single member of the Viceroy's Executive Council is drawn from the Legislative Assembly. Men without any previous experience of the Central Legislature were nominated as members of the Viceroy's Executive Council. In future on matters of Finance and Railways the powers of Ministers may not be complete. Army and Foreign and Political Departments will be reserved subjects.

The Indian Civil Service.

4. "Wisdom compels us to see.....the end of the Civil Service as we have known it." (P. 113).

This end is not far off. With a democratic system, the elimination of the Europeans at the Centre will not be insisted on, as in the past.

"The Indian Civil Service must conform far more to the conditions and status of the Home Service and must no longer be recruited for the higher posts of the Executive." (P. 113.)

That will be so under the White Paper Scheme.

Army Expenditure.

5. "The present plan, by which India pays for the Imperial army stationed there, without in any way determining policy, is as bad as it can be. If the existing system of military defence is to last, the whole cost of the British army stationed in India should be borne by the Imperial Exchequer." (P. 155.)

Under the existing arrangement, India cannot vote on the bulk of the Military Budget. The Indian Legislative Assembly has the power of criticism during the general discussion of the Budget. It has also an opportunity to criticise the Army expenditure when minor items of the Army Department come under the list of demands. India has demanded that its Parliament should have the right to determine the Military policy but that right has been denied to her under the White Paper Scheme.

England will be repeatedly called upon to bear the expenses of the British Army stationed in India as it used to bear in the case of the Colonies before they were granted Home Rule.

The Defence.

6. "A self-governing India would no doubt insist upon bearing some definite share in defence, but like the Dominions it would settle how much it ought to bear: it would adjust the cost to its means and it would decide in what form it was to make its contribution—perhaps an Indian recruited army." (P. 155.)

Self-governing India would insist on her right to raise and maintain a National army. But whether Communalism or Nationalism commands the future is still a subject of speculation !

The Administration of Justice.

7. "It is contended that the separation [of the Judiciary from the Executive] will impose a heavier cost upon Indian revenues. Even supposing this were true.....cheapness cannot justify a bad system. If suspicion about judicial decisions can be bought at the cost of a few thousand pounds a year, the end will be cheaply bought." (P. 203 and 204.)

"Indeed it is most objectionable that the officer responsible for collecting evidence and prosecuting through the police should be the judge who tries the case or that the head of the police should be a magistrate who is also the head of the district Criminal Courts." (P. 202.)

"There can be no doubt that the present condition invites suspicion." (P. 203.)

"That the subordinate magistrates are controlled by executive officers, that judicial promotion depends upon the good-will of officers who are frequently parties to suits, is a bad system,.....a system that will not be accepted, will not emerge from its enveloping cloud of suspicion, and ought to be changed." (P. 204.)

That system, however, still continues. The Judiciary has not been separated from the Executive. The separation involves heavy expenditure. Will India (burdened with costly reforms) find the money for separation of the Judiciary from the Executive ?

8. "It [the problem in India] can never be solved by the good offices of Downing Street, but by the independent authority of an India which enjoys the

same dignity and respect as one of the British-populated Dominions." (P. 219.)

That dignity and respect summed up in the phrase 'Dominion Status' have not been conferred under the White Paper Scheme. Yet it is denounced by the diehards as a 'white flag scheme of surrender.'



PART II



CHAPTER XX.

THE NEW DISPENSATION.

"But I do fight, let me tell you frankly, as a subject of King George, and I fight for a place in his household and I will not be content with a place in his stables."

SIR TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU.—*At the Imperial Conference 1923.*

The novel constitution for India has features which find no place in any other constitution in the world. Yet it has friends both in Britain and India who justify its uniqueness on the ground that Indo-British union is unique in itself, without a parallel in the history of mankind. A small island divided from India by mountains, continent, and a world of seas, has found in it an Empire. Will the new constitution promote the growth of this Empire and Indo-British union or will it make for the cessation of the further working of the scheme of uniting East and West by disrupting the British Empire in India? Is the new constitution the last word on constitution-making? Are the Extremists at both ends who denounce it with fervour true or false prophets?

The new constitution is certainly baffling in certain aspects. It is full of safeguards. The Conservative Government have approached the problem of India with extraordinary caution. Sir Samuel Hoare whom Mr. Winston Churchill truly described as "a

mild mannered gentleman," is steeped in the spirit of Toryism as his evidence before the Joint Select Committee of Parliament has disclosed much to the embarrassment of Indian moderates and Nationalists alike.

It was the trend of British opinion that counted, to Lord Irwin when I met him in Whitehall last year. It was not the Viceroy of India who was speaking to me but one of His Majesty's Ministers, friend of Mr. Baldwin who has offered battle to the Conservative diehards. Since the day Lord Irwin was persuaded by the Socialist Government to make the sensational "Dominion Status" declaration, Mr. Baldwin has not had an easy row to hoe. Speaking in the House of Commons four years ago, Mr. Baldwin stood by his "friend" the Viceroy. "I never let down a friend," said he amidst applause from all sides. Since then, both in and outside the House, Mr. Baldwin has stood out and spoken earnestly for another instalment of progressive reforms for India.

Indian public opinion does not want reforms in dribblets. It asks for Responsible Government. Neither Mr. Baldwin nor the Socialist Government assisted by the Conservative Viceroy, Lord Irwin, have promised the grant of Dominion Status straightway. The Indian public do not cheaply accuse His Majesty's Government of having promised Dominion Status and backed out of that promise.

The British public, however, are aware that Indians take their stand on their inalienable right to freedom. "Freedom cannot be obtained by negotiation," says the Extremist who has boycotted the legislatures and suffered imprisonment by boycotting the British Government and British goods. The constitutionalists, who are not necessarily

Moderates, believe in real freedom within the British Empire, in what used to be termed in old Congress parlance as "colonial autonomy," by negotiating with the British. All parties in Great Britain believe they have done everything in their power to promote the spirit of negotiation and compromise by summoning Indians to London in connexion with the various committees that were at work in Whitehall and Westminster, trying their best to evolve a constitution for India.

Sir Samuel Hoare, the painstaking Secretary of State for India, has indicated, without mincing matters, not caring for the frowns of the diehards, whether Indian or British, the lines on which India is to be developed to keep her in the ambit of the Empire on less than Colonial terms of Imperial equality.

For the first time the Secretary of State for India decided to appear as a witness before the Joint Select Committee of Parliament and the Indian delegates associated with it. The question was discussed in the Cabinet as Sir Samuel Hoare confided to us at a dinner given by the members of the Central Legislature who were invited to work on one or other of the Committees connected with constitution-making in Whitehall. Probably opinion in the Cabinet was not unanimous as to whether the Secretary of State for India should appear as a witness. But the Government had a case which the enterprising Minister for India was anxious to present. Moreover, a split in the Conservative ranks was widening owing to a misunderstanding that India was going to be given Dominion Home Rule which means ending Imperial supremacy in that vast sub-continent. Sir Samuel Hoare shares the enthusiasm for Imperialism of the brilliant and fascinating Churchill but not his woeful

lack of judgment on the Indian issue. He does not belong to "the Y. M. C. A. School of Lord Irwin" as the diehard papers derided the present Lord Halifax. He was not the Secretary of State when Lord Irwin was the Viceroy. Capt. Wedgwood Benn, his Socialist predecessor, was openly determined to revive what he called "the Montagu spirit." He had the support of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald who had expert knowledge of India, having visited that country more than once and also written more books than one on the subject. Though Mr. Ramsay MacDonald is still the Prime Minister, the Tory Secretary of State has carefully omitted throughout his speeches and in the White Paper, Lord Irwin's ill-fated phrase "Dominion Status." He does not want to court more trouble with his party and his constituents by using a fiercely controversial expression. He himself probably shared the apprehension of the late Lord Birkenhead regarding the grant of Dominion *Status* to India.

"Never, never, never," exclaimed the late Lord Birkenhead in the House of Lords debate on India in November 1929, answering the query, will or can the position of the Governor-General of India be approximated to that of the Governor-General of Australia? Sir Samuel Hoare had clothed the Governor-General with special powers which, under the new scheme, will make him more powerful than the Czars before their fall, Hitler in the height of his uncontrolled authority to-day and the President of the United States of America with extraordinary constitutional rights and prerogatives. The centre of authority in the new scheme is the Governor-General. He will be responsible to the Secretary of State for India. Behind him will be both the British and the Indian Army which will not be transferred to Indian control. He will also extend his authority to the Provinces and

exercise control over the Provinces through the Governor who will practically be the Agent of the British Empire in India, keeping the Law and Order Minister responsible to the Provincial Legislature under his control and brushing him aside by one heavy sweep of the official hand, should there be the faintest suspicion that tranquillity was being undermined or loyalty to British Raj tampered with.

India under the new dispensation is kept out of that Dream-land called Independence. Every precaution that is conceivable is taken to prevent India breaking off from the British Empire, because a big buffer is to be created from out of the Indian States and made into a powerful block in the Central Legislature, alike in its Upper and Lower House. The States are tied to Britain by treaties. Each ruler of the State claims to be directly connected with his liege-lord, the Emperor of India. And the intimate contact of the States and the Empire is to be extended to the Federal India of the future by granting to the Princes the right of carrying on the King's Government in that territory, should the rebels threaten British supremacy.

Sir Samuel Hoare, the truly Conservative Secretary of State for India, has shown the way to keep India as an appendage of the British Empire giving her freedom to conduct civil government in the Provinces within certain defined limits, without jeopardizing British lives, British interests or British connexion. He has also given a good taste of responsibility in the Centre.

The Indian Home Rulers dislike his scheme which they are scheming to wreck. Some Moderate constitutionalists hope to work it at any cost. The Extremists may choose to boycott it and thus boycott themselves

from the path of constitutionalism until they succeed in evolving and enforcing a constitution of their own by creating what they describe as "sanction." But the triumph of Sir Samuel Hoare and Parliament and Lord Willingdon the Viceroy who had put up an obstinate fight against the Congress will lie in the fact that the non-co-operating babes of the woods—and of the prisons—are returning to the Legislatures, lowering the flag of Independence and showing a readiness to take the oath of allegiance to His Majesty the King, his heirs and successors.

To this extent, His Majesty's Government have triumphed. But the tactics of the new-comers may yet turn a distinct triumph into a pyrrhic victory. They may propose to enter the Legislatures with a view to set fire to them. They may aspire to capture the Provincial machinery of Government to use all its resources to further the object of the Congress. But their parties are hopelessly split. Are they capable of united action? Will their "bite" be so bad as the "bark"? The diehards in England have grave apprehensions whether the new constitution will not be exploited by the Extremists to eliminate British rule from India. Whereas those Extremists in India who want to boycott the new Legislatures apprehend that if they enter them and declare their loyalty to the King, independence will cease to inspire even their intimate followers who will judge them more by their deeds than by their heroic words. The Extremists, both British and Indian, have no love for the new constitution. Extremes meet !

CHAPTER XXI

THE CONGRESS—THE FUTURE

Till the war-drums throb no longer and the battle
flags are furled

In the parliament of men, the federation of the world.

—*Tennyson.*

India is one-fifth of the world judging from population. The White Paper gives her a federation in which Indian and British India will come together. The Congress does not propose to stand out in boycotting aloofness. Its Left wing has set its face aggressively to Socialism. Its younger men still dream of the New Jerusalem. They dream of a new world city of mankind. They think internationally. But the older men in the Congress, like the Mahatma, do not believe in borrowing the evils of Socialism from the West. It is for the East, they feel, to make it temperate, human, forgiving, divine.

The Congress may become an organ of Socialism but it is certainly not so easy. The Socialism of a section of the people in India—probably and possibly a growing section—can never be the Socialism of Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru. It will be Socialism which must grow on the genius of the race, its faith in God—not the destructive Socialism of the Pundit which professes to copy Russia even to the extent of destroying our temples, mosques and churches, our idols and our gods.

The Socialism which Pundit Jawaharlal preaches is a sort of Maxian fatalism, an economic suicide in a country where down from the age of the Vedas individualism has had the fullest and freest fair-play. India will not agree in a hurry to the expropriating of the Many for the benefit of the expropriating Few which Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru hopes to bring about by organized Class Conflict. It is at the altar of Class Conflict, that Mahatma Gandhi himself was made to sacrifice his Civil Disobedience Movement.

The No-rent campaign in the United Provinces initiated by Pundit Jawaharlal was the beginning of that Class Conflict which came as a God-send to Lord Willingdon's and Sir Malcolm Hailey's governments. The public opinion in the United Provinces which had a condescending pity in the case of some and a genuine sympathy in the case of others who were spectators and not participants in the strife, became hostile to the Congress, the moment the Allahabad Pundit blew the bugle of Class War. The Gandhi movement was directed against British Rule. It was a struggle for national freedom. To bring it to success, to crown it with the spirit of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, the Mahatma had proceeded to England. Before his task had begun, cables reached him from India that he must return, because the Pundit had embarked on a new war! The Mahatma should have repudiated the Pundit because the No-rent campaign had not even the glamour of a No-tax campaign which the Mahatma once had in view.

The No-rent campaign is directed against our own people. The No-tax campaign, on the contrary, could be directed by the tax-paying public against the Government on the ground that it was alien and with a view to bringing pressure upon it, in order to

make the system more Indian and responsible, in the parliamentary sense. Had the Mahatma repudiated the No-renters, the history of his negotiations in England and the contents of the White Paper would have been different and less unsatisfactory.

Had Lord Willingdon granted the Mahatma the interview which he had sought and enabled him with official help to examine the problem on the spot, probably things would have shaped differently. The writer repeatedly urged the view in the Assembly that Lord Willingdon should allow the Mahatma to meet him and rescue the No-renters from the morass into which Pundit Jawaharlal had dragged them. Probably the Viceroy suspected that the Mahatma had too soft a corner for Jawaharlal. His Excellency would not hold up the constitution-making in Whitehall because of a provincial obstacle. Moreover the Provincial Governments themselves had set up a commission of enquiry in which the Congress could have taken part had it cared. That was the official view. The Pundit himself chose a career of sacrifice which he felt was more congenial for the growth of his Socialistic ideas.

The No-rent campaign did not get the support which it had expected from the Congress. Men like Mr. Birla were openly and thoroughly opposed to Pandit Jawaharlal's scheme. Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviya did not feel inclined to repeat his march to the prison. He persuaded his young son Pundit Govind Kant Malaviya who had opportunities of taking another trip to jail, not to defy the order under the Ordinance calling on him to leave Benares. The public attitude toward Class War was conspicuous by its coolness. Moderate Congressmen were probably glad that the No-renters fell by their own excesses

and extravagances. The No-rent campaign revealed that there were two parties in the Congress—Socialists and Nationalists.

The Nationalists like Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviya were not either physically or mentally fit to take part in the Civil Disobedience movement. Bred in an atmosphere of parliamentary politics, aggressive Civil Disobedience was a thing to which their nature was alien. Had they contented themselves with the performance of the task for which nature had qualified them, they would have made as best a contribution, from the point of view of their own conscience, to the National upbuilding, as they perhaps thought they would be making when they joined the jail-going procession.

Suffering in the jail, which did not melt the heart of their British opponent, but on the contrary stiffened his back, perhaps convinced our Civil Disobedience comrades of the old Nationalist school that there was more wisdom and worth in resuming their old work in the Councils. The Nationalists had lost heart in the Civil Disobedience method of warfare. The Mahatma appears to have felt that they have lost faith in Civil Disobedience altogether. That was why he said that he was the only person fit to offer Civil Disobedience to-day. Thereby he did not condemn the rest as unfit. He duly proved the "survival of the fittest"! The Civil Disobedience movement itself became a survival and a relic.

The defeat of that movement as Britain and Lord Willingdon may claim it or "the suppression of it," as the Congress people call it in anger or sorrow according to temperament—both mean the same thing, the end of that movement. Those who do not reconcile themselves to ending it hope to mend it by

entering the Legislatures and reviving the old tactics of obstruction which the late Deshabandhu C. R. Das with the vision of a poet and the enthusiasm of a Parnell made so great a success that dyarchy was suspended in Bengal much to the disappointment of Lord Lytton. Lord Lytton and the late C. R. Das later on met at a friend's house privately and had a heart to heart talk. That showed that obstruction was appreciated by the powers that be—because it is only the *neplus ultra* of constitutionalism.

The question of reviving obstruction in the Legislatures in Provinces which have autonomy will be more difficult unless the Governor is so overbearing as to abuse his overriding powers when Ministers and their Council majorities would resign and seek the mandate of the people in which invariably the verdict of the *Demos* will be for upholding the defiant legislatures who stand no nonsense from the Governor. Knowing the inevitableness of the public verdict no Governor will be so thick-headed as to try conclusions with a popular Ministry. But it is difficult to predict that De Valeras will not arise in the Provinces who will accept office with the set purpose of creating deadlocks.

It is only by frequent clashes between the Government and the Governor that a Congress Ministry out for obstruction can keep up the enthusiasm of the Volunteers who stand to gain nothing by the Council-entry programme. Secretly, in their hearts, the obstructionists in the Congress cannot be sorry for the safeguards and the special powers of the Governor. Their attempt will be to isolate the Governor from the Council. The Governor will, in that case, have to rely more upon his powers than public support. But, how can a

Government hope to maintain their position only by obstructive tactics? The Congress will be the Government if it has a majority in the Councils and not the Governor, under the new dispensation. That being so, it has to govern. People cannot be fed on pyrotechnics alone. It will have to find money by taxation which is not popular. Even if Congressmen want to put their own ideas of Socialism into practice, they must be prepared to meet opposition and resistance.

While the destructive side to their work may appeal to the Volunteers—because iron has entered their souls—the constructive programme which will have to be the Ministers' main task will produce more critics and opponents than friends. For instance the Mahatma's unpopularity today—and the unrestrained excesses of the Sanatanist firebrands many of whom were his admirers during the Civil Disobedience movement—is a direct result of his embarking upon constructive work. The Mahatma who is not afraid of unpopularity—he likes it for a change—expects those who want to go to the Councils not to indulge in opposition for opposition's sake. Of course, he has no use for obstruction. He was never in its favour. He believes that the Councils can do some good. Their main business is co-operation. The Mahatma's own motto for the Councillors will be—'Co-operation whenever possible and opposition whenever necessary.'

The Congress party will split the moment it enters the Council. This split will be inevitable in the Provinces in which it happens to secure a majority. Once in office which Congressmen cannot avoid, they will realize how impossible it is to translate into acts their brave and brilliant shouts at the hustings. Once in office they can no longer afford to

be purely economic doctrinaires or banshees crying in the wilderness. They may even have to antagonize their erstwhile followers. Theirs will be the difficult task of working out the riddle and the complications of administration. Charges of betrayal are the voices that come to us from the future. And counter-charges of crude ignorance!

The Congress has to come down from its giddy pedestal if it is to have a hand in the administration of the country. Abandoning the position of wreckers of the administration, Congressmen have to play the role of administrators. Up to now the Congress was able to rise above the warring purposes of parties resting its faith on the broad proposition that a subject nation could have no party politics. Up to now it could call upon the people to rise out of base and immediate solicitudes to participate in a national struggle against "a foreign Government." The foreigner is prepared to recede into the background leaving it to indigenous parties to run the administration. The invisible authority under the White Paper Scheme will not be easy to attack if the Congress people stand out of the picture and boycott the Legislatures. But once placed on the *Gadi* of administration, their visible opponents will be the Opposition. They will find that the tables which they had turned against the Government will now be turned against themselves who are the Government. If they walk out of office to cover up failure and revive Civil Disobedience, their own party will split, as a section will refuse to "rat."

If they keep out of the Councils and do constructive good, they can be as useful as the Salvation Army, the missionary societies, Servants of India and of the Untouchables. There are many Congressmen who want to get out of the cramped

surroundings of politics. They can no longer submit patiently to their dwarfing pressures. These good men and true will have no use for playing the destructive role in the Councils. That, in their belief, is neither fine nor useful. It is not even honest. These men do not like the idea of the Congress becoming an election caucus. That will be coming down from its Himalayan height and giving to a party what has hitherto been meant for the nation. In deference to their wishes, the Swarajists did not want to merge themselves in the Congress but to emerge from it.

The future is not with the Congress any more than the past. They have blundered in the past notwithstanding the clear vision and the incorruptible leadership of Gandhi, the only Mahatma of our times. Had the Mahatma not listened to the voices of the younger and extremer men and gone to Lahore and declared independence, had he instead gone to London with the "predominant representation" which he was promised at the Round Table Conference, he could have transferred the power and the energy of his followers to do propaganda among the British masses changing their attitude of indifference into one of active sympathy for India. Then the Socialists who were in power would have declared—as Gladstone did in the case of Ireland—in favour of Indian Home Rule. The Indian reforms would have been working now as the Conservatives themselves would not have dared to challenge a General Election on India which was a dark horse as far as the British public were concerned. The Socialists as a party were not prepared to take risks, because the public mind of England had yet to be instructed on the issue. Who could have educated England, Wales and Scotland better than the able followers of the Mahatma ?

Let us suppose that in spite of all the negotiations, the White Paper Scheme did not satisfy the Congress. That was not unlikely, though it would have been a better White Paper than the one we have got, because Parliament respects and tries to placate the leaders with public opinion behind them. If the Congress, disappointed with the White Paper, wanted to start Civil Disobedience as a protest, it would have been open to it to do so, all the time feeling happy that the new constitution was after all a result of its labours and its improvement would be a result of its suffering. Even the very people who would prosper on that constitution could not in that case but have felt a sense of obligation to the Congress leaders who had laboured to secure it. And the Congress itself, which would have impressed Britain of its constructive genius and qualities of statesmanship—which its leaders have in abundance and would have displayed in Committee and Conference—would have been invited again to explore fresh avenues for a fuller understanding and a more lasting settlement.

Even from the Civil Disobedience people's point of view, it will be admitted that their movement was precipitated three years in advance. The provocation for the first Non-Cooperation movement as a protest against Amritsar shooting was the irresistible rage of a nation in agony. There was no such provocation for the launching of the 1930 movement. The Viceroy, in response to the Swarajists' agitation in the Legislative Assembly, had made a declaration in favour of Dominion Status. He was prepared to give every facility and opportunity to present their case at a Round Table Conference which was part of their demand which he had met. If the Congress people had feared their fate too much, at the hands of unsympathetic Britons, they would not have asked

for a Round Table Conference. Having asked for it and got the assurance of adequate representation on it, they should have attempted to weld the Hindus and Muslims into a united whole and presented a front of steel to the steel-frame of Whitehall. The Congress leaders have to thank themselves if the White Paper Scheme is more pale than red. That they are nevertheless coming to the legislature is a happy augury. Constitutionalism is alive and kicking and not dead as their past. As for their future, it is verily verily in the lap of our gods and the growing—groaning—commonsense of our people.

If the Congress people do not stage again walk-in and walk-out but put up a continued and continuous fight, and rely on the strength of their arguments more and on their capacity to suffer in jails less, Parties, the only foundation of Swaraj, will permanently come into existence. There will be two parties always,—Liberal and Conservative, as every man and woman is either a little conservative or a little liberal. These parties can be,—if a section of the Congressmen rely on their lungs more than their legs, more on the ballot-box than the prison-bars,—Socialists and Nationalists. Constitutional socialism is as justifiable as constitutional nationalism.

If the Socialist and the Nationalist are united in a common rebellion, having lost faith in constitutionalism, then again there will be two parties—the Government and the Rebels. India will always, once responsibility is introduced, carry on the King's Government. Hitherto the struggle has been to achieve responsibility. Hereafter the struggle will be to retain what has been achieved, should rebellion be revived.

The White Paper Scheme which is as unsatis-

factory as it happens to be has one merit. It has turned the tide against Civil Disobedience. As the attack of the Congress was hitherto directed against the foreigner, he has so manipulated the new reforms that if the Congress boycotts them and engineers Civil Disobedience, the engineers will be hoist by their own petard. The Congress has either to perish by the hands of its own people or it has to follow the beaten track of co-operation even if it should masquerade as obstruction. Co-operation means mutual obligation. It is not a one sided operation but mutual and the mutuality makes it co-operation. Tilak called it "Responsive Co-operation" which he knew was redundant, for co-operation presumes responsiveness. But tautology in politics is necessary for diplomats who have to deal with wiseacres and duffers.

The White Paper, inadequate as it is, can be considerably improved in actual working. Its safeguards can be mitigated, and if necessary, resisted by Ministers of character and calibre. Organized parties in the Legislatures, instead of being appalled by the special powers of the Governor or the Governor-General, can create a new India, a new race of men and women, finely bred and taught, husbanding and harvesting the vast resources of this great country, economizing and using them with scientific skill for the greatest good of the greatest number.

CHAPTER XXII

CHURCHILL—AND SWARAJISTS.

Conflicting thoughts incamped in my breast
Awake me with the echo of their strokes,
And I, a judge to censure either side,
Can give to neither wished victory.

Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill represents the old type of Imperialist who is honestly convinced that the White Paper scheme sounds the knell of Imperial power and prestige in India. The writer had a long talk with him in his flat in London. Mr. Churchill has personal knowledge of and admiration for the people of Madras. His recollections of Life in Bangalore in his fascinating book, *My Early Life*, which the writer recalled were confined to the Madras barber and the money-lender! The barber gave Winston a clean shave every morning—all the time the latter dreading whether he would cut his throat, as he has humorously recorded. The money-lender was useful as young Winston with his choice taste for wines and cigars could not live on a subaltern's wages and his allowance from Randolph Churchill, his famous father, sometimes came late. Mr. Churchill also knows the Justice Party which showed such striking good sense in working the Montagu reforms. He offered this Madras Brahmin the expensive cigar that he smokes. Here was a point of agreement between us both. And when I bore a hole at one end of the cigar

with a match-stick, Mr. Churchill smiling said that that was how he also did it.

Frankly, he was surprised to hear that the effect of his propaganda in England, though but a passing phase, was that Englishmen had begun to hate Indians even as Indians hated British rule. Mr. Churchill could not have liked my remark but for what immediately followed: it was a pity that Mr. Baldwin left him out of the Cabinet—in which case he would have fought in the Cabinet what he was unfortunately for India forced to do in public. Mr. Churchill was opposed to the Egyptian settlement. He supported in the Cabinet the policy for which Lord Lloyd stood in Egypt. Even Sir Austen Chamberlain, the then Foreign Secretary, was not enamoured of the strong rule of Lord Lloyd. But if the Conservative Government did not withdraw Lord Lloyd from Egypt, it was due to Mr. Churchill's strong support in the Cabinet. So was he opposed to the Irish settlement until the very last. His opposition to Indian settlement would have ended with the final decision of the Cabinet. Winston believes, when in office, in ultimately subordinating his personal conviction to the collective wisdom of the Cabinet. Moreover, he is essentially a House of Commons man. And when his Government has a majority to back him, however hostile his personal view might have been, with whatever bitterness he might have spoken within the prison-walls of the Cabinet, he would have loyally supported his party-in-power and done propaganda for them, out in the country. He is the fiercest propagandist in England to-day and decidedly the best speaker in the House of Commons. He has been such a thorn in the side of Sir Samuel Hoare and Mr. Baldwin that it is not unlikely that at the next General Election, he will be severely opposed by a

Government candidate. All this Mr. Churchill knows. He has ventured greatly. He is prepared to sacrifice greatly, because he feels that the cause of the Empire is great. The White Paper, in his view, unless modified, will be its epitaph.

But for the opposition of Mr. Churchill, however, the British Government would not probably have succeeded in creating an atmosphere for the White Paper in India, such as it is. Even the Congress might not have been tempted to untread its steps and return to the Legislatures so hastily and decided to set up candidates for the old Assembly under the old constitution which, having failed to destroy, it did its best to reduce to a mockery by a fervent campaign of boycott emphasised by fervid speeches and a formidable Civil Disobedience revolt. "When Mr. Churchill is so bitterly opposed, when the die-hards denounce it as *surrender*, surely the White Paper cannot be so worthless"—that is the inner voice of the Congress which means to take office under the White Paper Scheme of provincial autonomy. Lord Willingdon's determination to dissolve the Assembly—already afflicted in Gladstone's phrase, with "the premonitory lethargy of death"—was rooted in his faith of being and becoming a constitutional Viceroy, as he described his ambition on landing in India. Once the Congress abandoned the illegal method of disobedience and returned to what Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru once derided as the "sheltered path," it was for a constitutionalist Viceroy to make things easy for the Congress. The Government of India *communique* announcing the dissolution of the present Assembly was issued on the eve of the Ranchi meeting to strengthen Mahatma Gandhi's hands to leave the Swarajist Conference every

opportunity of transferring their outside agitation to the Legislative Assembly.

The late C. R. Das will salute the Mahatma from the grave for realizing that by boycotting the Legislatures the Congressmen were "only boycotting themselves," as the Deshabandhu used to say from a hundred platforms when, amidst the hootings and the hisses of the no-changers, he preached Council-entry. Then the writer had stuck closely to the Deshabandhu and was put up as the first speaker to face the hostile audience. The soul of Deshabandhu will rejoice that the Viceroy did not put any unnecessary or ungenerous obstacle in the way of Congressmen returning to their fight within the Legislatures. It is hoped that the old disqualification of Congressmen who had been in jail for more than a year will not stand in their way now.

Had Lord Willingdon chosen the facile path, he would have yielded to the wish of some of the legislators to extend the life of the Assembly. It will redound to his credit that the Viceroy refused firmly to yield to the wishes of his loyal supporters. While certainly more friendly to their politics—harmless and helpful to the Government interests—Lord Willingdon showed true loyalty to the soundest principle of Gladstonian Liberalism in which he was steeped in his youthful days,—the loyalty to the constitution which ought to rise above personal considerations.

Will the Swarajist policy give restless days to the Viceroy as it gave sleepless nights to that Legislative stalwart, Sir Lancelot Graham, in the mighty days of Pundit Motilal Nehru and President Vithalbhai Patel? It was Sir Lancelot Graham who was the "fatted calf" of Lord Irwin's Government

invariably sacrificed to placate the "prodigal son," the Swarajist President. The best brain of the Government of India then—and now also—notwithstanding the fact that he was repeatedly sacrificed to placate Swarajism—whose appetite increased with the eating—to his greatness and admirable sense of detachment be it said, Sir Lancelot Graham was definitely for the dissolution of the last Assembly. His advice to the Viceroy counted in this matter more than the advice of any other single man in the Government of India, for he had the largest legislative experience. He was there right from the inception of the new reforms. Though he opposed President Patel in the separation of the Assembly Department as any Secretary worth his salt would oppose a partition of his own department, though he gave points to the Government spokesmen on the Treasury Benches as it was his business to do, to meet the unrelenting arguments of the subtle brains of experienced and eminent lawyers like the late lamented Pundit Motilal Nehru, Mr. S. Srinivasa Ayengar and Mr. Mahomed Ali Jinnah, yet he has made easy the return of the Swarajists—not rendered tame by suffering or weak by fate—though it will make it more difficult for the Legislative Secretary. Sir Lancelot Graham moves with the times and has not only a real sympathy for Indian aspirations but also a natural capacity to win the confidence and gain the friendship of Indians of even the most radical school. In good old days, the Opposition leaders always admitted in their private talk that they were up against Sir Lancelot Graham. Nothing would have pleased them more had he been sent away as the Governor of an Indian Province, for there his own gift of statesmanship would shine for the good of the people whereas in the Assembly his intellectual sharpness, his quick brain and his

intelligent anticipation of every unexpected contingency and climax often confounded and sometimes defeated the combination and manœuvres of the giants-that-were.

The Opposition then counted besides the eminent lawyers above-mentioned also the ablest politicians of the day. Lala Lajpat Rai is no longer with us. He was a power to reckon with. Sir Purushottam Das Thakurdas was the spokesman for the financial interests of India. By him stood Mr. Ghanshyam Das Birla, frail in body and fine in brain. We had also other learned men like Mr. Jayakar, shrewd diplomats like Mr. Kelkar and Mr. Aney who tried to confuse the Government with that born sagacity of the Maharastrian, bred in the Tilak school, with a statesmanship as nimble as Sivaji's horsemanship and flair. It was a grand show, the Assembly then. It was that Assembly's politics that revived the atmosphere of aggressive Nationalism in the country which made Civil Disobedience practicable. Swarajism in the Councils rose on the ashes of Civil Disobedience only to revive Civil Disobedience itself.

Then a Civil Disobedience Committee had roamed the country and come to the conclusion that it was dead. The Mahatma was then in jail. Now, without the necessity for a committee of enquiry, the expert that he is, has sensed the atmosphere, demoralized by skilful repression of unprecedented cold-bloodedness and pertinacity and pugnacity. Though some of the great men are gone, and the lure of Provincial autonomy is not altogether lost on the latter-day Swarajists, so far as the Assembly is concerned the Swarajists are animated only by one purpose—to fight stubbornly and send a new pulse beating through the country for the next Provincial elections with a view to capture power and use the resources of the Government to further the Congress programme.

The Swarajist plan of Assembly campaign has no originality. The Swarajists themselves freely admit this. They only aspire to live up to the reputation of their predecessors. Though not so great as the men that have gone, they are animated with the spirit, they hope and pray, of the late C. R. Das and Lala Lajpat Rai. They want to be worthy of the cause to which those giants had dedicated their talents. Even those who may differ from their programme will not deny that they are strong in will—"to strive, to seek, to find and not to yield."

They will, as soon as they enter the Assembly, try to pass a resolution condemning the White Paper Scheme. In their hostility to this "worthless" document as Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru has contemptuously called it, they are as bad as Mr. Winston Churchill. They may be trusted to quote Mr. Churchill's derision of the Viceregal power under the proposed reforms as larger than that of the Czars before their fall, larger by far than the power exercised by Hitler and Mussolini, greater than the power of the President of the United States of America. They will call the scheme unworkable and try to prove that as it cannot be worked it has to be wrecked and a new one made in its place. They will probably repeat Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru's suggestion about a Constituent Assembly and press for adult franchise. They will quote from a recent authority, "a sun-dried bureaucrat," who has bravely blessed the All-Party Report's recommendation about adult suffrage, in his address to the Parliamentary Committee of the Conservative Party in the House of Commons in April. Sir Henry Lawrence, formerly a member of the Bombay Government, said that the franchise was admittedly the foundation on which the new

Constitution must rest and he found himself unable to approve the proposals of the Lothian Committee and broadly accepted by the Government. These were based on a property qualification at a time when in his country such a qualification had been discarded. He said the proposals would enfranchise many millions of illiterate men who would be liable to be stampeded by the wildest rumours, and did not give sufficient voting power to the humbler classes, to guard themselves against exploitation by the propertied classes. He submitted that it showed a lack of vision and courage to set up a system which gave the poorer classes no weapon of defence.

"My humble submission," Sir Henry added, "is that the best road to the equal partnership so earnestly desired is by confirming the electoral power of the peasantry (90 per cent. of the population) through Adult Suffrage and Indirect Election. It is because Indian politicians (both of the Congress Party and Moderate sections) know that Indirect Elections would give political power to the peasantry that they oppose this electoral procedure with such determination."

Sir Henry Lawrence is hardly fair to the Congressmen when he says that they are opposed to indirect election—but the Moderates have certainly been opposed to it. The Congressmen, including Gandhi, are perfectly willing to support indirect election with which they are familiar provided they get the power they seek. The fundamental difference between the Congress and Britain is about the transfer of power and not the manner of election. The Congress itself has embodied in its constitution indirect election which from the Congress point of view has worked extraordinarily well. The Congress

franchise is a four-anna one. Any adult who signs the Congress creed can be a Congressman. This is, more or less, adult franchise. More or less because there may be people—millions of them—who have no four annas to spare or who having, do not care to pay and become Congressmen. What Sir Henry Lawrence wants is adult franchise without a four-anna price—or penalty. Sir Henry is not a Churchillite. He is not a Congressman either. He is a friend of the masses.

Coming to indirect election, the District and Town Congress Committees elect representatives to the Provincial Congress Committees. The Provincial Congress Committees elect the members to the All-India Congress Committee which in its turn elects the Congress Cabinet known as the Congress Working Committee. The Congress therefore will not object to a system of indirect election.

Mahatma Gandhi was reported to have surprised the Moderates while in England when he said that he was not against indirect election. Probably he wanted to apply his Congress experience to the Swaraj Constitution to prepare which the Congressmen in the Legislatures would press for the convening of a grand Constituent Assembly for pan-India. The Moderates may retort, "is not the Federal Assembly a Constituent Assembly?"

Be that as it may, the whole problem which Britain must boldly face is the introduction of Federal Responsibility without much waiting. The General Election for the Legislative Assembly ought not to be made an excuse for delaying the reforms at the Centre. The King's Speech last year referred to the expediting of the Reforms. To have known the Congress mind in regard to them was good. To

have given a constitutional opportunity to the Congress itself to have its say on the White Paper Scheme by dissolving the Assembly was statesmanship. But to play into the hands of Mr. Winston Churchill, because both he and the Congressmen agree that the White Paper should be burnt and buried, would be folly. Sir Samuel Hoare who has been braving the lion in his own den—though not a little nervous when Churchill shakes his manes, as evidenced by the trepidation in India Office when Lord Willingdon was ready to stampede the Congress into full-blooded and full-throated constitutionalism—is not likely to be afraid of the vegetarian tigers of our aggressive nationalism. The Congressmen are not man-eaters. They do not taste blood. The Congress creed, at any rate, is still non-violent. And they avoided, to the triumph of their creed it must be owned,—a Chauri Chaura. Last time, the Mahatma laid down the arms because he wanted to do penance for Chauri Chaura. This time, Lord Willingdon forcibly removed his arms and sent the 'naked fakir' among the sparsely dressed untouchables of the land. The Mahatma likes the job—the crown of his mission. He has ordered the politicians to the Council to make it hot for Lord Willingdon who, God willing, may yet succeed in building a bridge between the Congress and Britain, thereby ending a feud between two great antagonists, each of them sincere in their own way and anxious to work out their common destiny for the good both of India and Britain and the Commonwealth as a whole. Who doubts this has only to read the Gandhi-Irwin Pact which is neither the shadow of independence nor the substance of Dominion Status.

What is needed is in Mahatmaji's picturesque phrase: "A change of heart" which the Congress

has indicated by Council-entry. But our good and wise Moderates will also expect a change of plans, for the old plan included boycott of the Viceregal functions and official parties. It was after some time realized by the Swaraj Party that Parliamentary obstruction and social boycott went ill together. Therefore they removed the old ban which, however, was re-imposed by the Working Committee of the Congress under Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru's inspiration and paternal benevolence.

Times have changed but whether hearts have also changed can be judged only by actual result. While the Government must be prepared to show increasing tolerance, the Swaraj Party must take a cheerful view of the bright future, made great by their sacrifice, and not grapple the sorrowful and gloomy past to their souls with hoops of steel. The ordering of the General Elections is a friendly official gesture. Given wisdom and restraint, Swarajism can lead the way to fresh woods and pastures new.

The one thing that no Indian patriot who aspires for Parliamentary Swaraj can afford in this crisis is to forget the strength of the diehards and the growing power among the English masses of Mr. Churchill who is no diehard, though their inspirer and prophet. He speaks not only for the diehards but a large number of honest Englishmen who feel that the White Paper Scheme and autonomous provinces with Central responsibility will dig the grave of British Rule in India. They are already hearing the thud of the spade. The safeguards have been piled like Ossa upon Olympus and that upon Pelion, because the diehards point to the Congress as the destroyer of British authority in India and the usurper of power under the dispensation of an

obliging Secretary of State. Sir Samuel Hoare is a born Conservative who might not have cared to give India more than what the White Paper conceded, hedged in as it is with close reservations to protect the Imperial interests. But if the Swarajists ignore the existence of diehards at the other end and the propaganda of Mr. Churchill, they can only succeed in making the White Paper worse before the India Bill is passed and when its actual working begins, the task of bureaucrats will be easy. What is needed is tact and a resolute purpose to improve the White Paper Scheme by courageous statesmanship. Let Messrs. Churchill & Co. "rattle the sabre." But ours must be a wise endeavour to widen the bounds of freedom.

CHAPTER XXIII

M. GANDHI AND LORD WILLINGDON.

Let Euclid rest and Archimedes pause.

—MILTON.

The public mind to-day is puzzled as to whether the purpose of the Swaraj Party—or “the Congress Party,” as it came to be styled officially after the new baptism which it received with the official recognition of it by the Congress—is to continue the constitutional work in the Legislature and secure an improvement of the new constitution or constitutionally work for its wrecking or use the privilege of the Assembly, to begin with, to speak out the Congress view and thus prepare the people outside for a revival of the Civil Disobedience Movement.

Civil Disobedience is the breath of Mahatmaji's nostrils. He made no secret of it when he came to India, after the Gandhi-Smuts Agreement which so far as the Mahatma was concerned was all that he could achieve for his countrymen in South Africa. He had to apply his wonderful experience as a Satyagrahi to the emancipation of his Motherland. This he knew. And Lord Willingdon, then Governor of Bombay, had feared that the Mahatma was a man with a mission. Could His Excellency have thought that he too was a “man with a mission”? Who could

have imagined twenty years ago that the two men with conflicting missions would come to a clash,— Gandhi as a leader of the Congress which he had not yet joined and Lord Willingdon as the Viceroy of India, though but a provincial satrap then? Lord Willingdon is credited with the knowledge of an expert to combat Civil Disobedience of which the Mahatma is the only adept the world has known and admired.

Lord Willingdon had felt instinctively that the Mahatma would repeat on an India-wide scale his South African experiment. He was more safe in South Africa than in India. So far as he submitted to Gokhale, it was all right. But for how long? It was Gokhale who had asked Gandhi to see the Governor.*

"The moment I reached Bombay, Gokhale sent me word that the Governor was desirous of seeing me, and that it might be proper for me to respond before I left for Poona. Accordingly I called on His Excellency."

It is obvious that Gokhale and Lord Willingdon had had a talk about Gandhi. Gokhale had nothing but affection for the Mahatma and Lord Willingdon was full of admiration for Gokhale. The only man to whom Gandhi would listen was Gokhale. Gandhi was a troublesome man. Once he took up a popular grievance, he would see it through or suffer and invite others to suffer. Lord Willingdon would avoid trouble if possible and face it if necessary.

Gandhi wanted to join the Servants of India Society, "but," said Gokhale, "whether you are formally admitted as a member or not, I am going to look upon you as one."†

*"The Story of My Experiments with Truth" by M. K. Gandhi, Vol. II. P. 286.

† *Ibid*, P. 288.

The members of the Servants of India Society hesitated in Gokhale's words "to take any risk" by admitting the Mahatma as a member of the Society. The Servants of India did not believe in Satyagraha. The Mahatma was a Satyagrahi.

"But," said Gokhale, "the members of the Society have not yet understood your readiness for compromise. They are tenacious of their principles, and quite independent. I am hoping they will accept you, but if they don't you will not for a moment think that they are lacking in respect or love for you."*

"But," writes the Mahatma, "the members felt that as there was a great difference between my ideals and methods of work and theirs, it might not be proper for me to join the Society."

"I ask one thing of you," said Lord Willingdon to Mr. (then) Gandhi. "I would like you to come and see me whenever you propose to take any steps concerning Government."

The "Mahatma" of the future replied:

"I can very easily give the promise, inasmuch as it is my rule, as a Satyagrahi, to understand the view-point of the party I propose to deal with, and to try to agree with him as far as may be possible. I strictly observed the rule in South Africa and I mean to do the same here."†

Lord Willingdon was the first high official in India who had a heart to heart talk with Gandhi and knew that he was going to serve the Motherland as he had served his adopted country, South Africa. Lord Willingdon wanted to avoid trouble so far as possible. His Excellency said to Gandhi:

**Ibid.* P. 288.

†*Ibid.* P. 287.

"You may come to me whenever you like and you will see that my Government do not wilfully do anything wrong."

To which Gandhi replied: "It is that faith which sustains me."*

It was after this talk that Gandhi went to Poona in the hope of joining the Servants of India Society which proved too restricted for the ideals and methods of the Mahatma.

What conversations Gokhale and Lord Willingdon had must remain a sealed book unless His Excellency writes his "Recollections" as the late Lord Morley or publishes a "Diary," if he has kept one, like the late Edwin Montagu.

"Do you think," Mr. Andrews asked Gandhi, "that a time will come for Satyagraha in India? And if so, have you any idea when it will come?"

"It is difficult to say," said I. "For one year, I am to do nothing. For Gokhale took from me a promise that I should travel in India for gaining experience and express no opinion on public questions until I have finished the period of probation. Even after the year is over, I will be in no hurry to speak and pronounce opinions. And so I do not suppose there will be any occasion for Satyagraha for five years or so."†

"I may note in this connexion," records the Mahatma, "that Gokhale used to laugh at my ideas in *Hind Swaraj* (Indian Home Rule)."‡

* *Ibid.*, P. 287.

† *Ibid.*, P. 305.

‡ *Ibid.*

"I called on the Private Secretary to Lord Willingdon and waited on His Excellency also," in connection with Viramgam customs and the hardships railway passengers had to suffer on that account.

The story of the hardships was revealed to the Mahatma by "the tailor Motilal, a noted public worker of the place."

"Are you prepared to go to jail," asked Gandhi. The Mahatma had taken Motilal to be a rash and impetuous youth who simply talked tall. But his reply "captivated" Gandhi: "We will certainly go to jail, provided you lead us. As Kathiawaris, we have the first right on you."

The customs cordon was removed after Gandhi's interview with Lord Chelmsford, the then Viceroy. The Mahatma apparently felt after the interview that Lord Willingdon was too much of a diplomat for him. His Excellency, to quote Gandhi, "shifted the blame on Delhi." He adds: "It was only when I had an occasion to meet Lord Chelmsford later that redress could be had. When I placed the facts before him he expressed his astonishment. He had known nothing of the matter." The Mahatma proceeds to state how Lord Chelmsford gave him "a patient hearing, telephoned that very moment for papers about Viramgam, and promised to remove the cordon, if the authorities had no explanation or defence to offer." Within a few days of that interview with the Viceroy, the customs cordon was removed.

"If it had been in our hands we should have removed the cordon long ago," that was what Lord Willingdon's Private Secretary, Sir James Crerar, had told the Mahatma before he went to see the Viceroy. "You should approach the Government of

India." It is obvious that Lord Willingdon's Government wanted to avoid trouble.

The idea of offering Satyagraha in connexion with Viramgam customs hardships had dawned on the Mahatma's mind. He had already made a reference to Satyagraha in a speech he had delivered in Bagasara (in Kathiawar) and of which Lord Willingdon's Secretary had a report.*

"The Secretary had expressed his disapproval," records the Mahatma.

"Is not this a threat," said the Secretary to Gandhi. "And do you think a powerful Government will yield to threats?"

"This was no threat," the Mahatma replied. "It was *educating* the people. It is my duty to place before the people all the legitimate remedies for grievances. A nation that wants to come into its own ought to know all the ways and means to freedom. Usually they include violence as the last remedy. Satyagraha, on the other hand, is an absolutely non-violent weapon. I regard it as my duty to explain its practice and its limitations. I have no doubt that the British Government is a powerful Government but I have no doubt also that Satyagraha is a sovereign remedy."

The Mahatma commenting on this episode wrote :

"The clever Secretary sceptically nodded his head and said : 'We shall see'!"

When interviews of some importance take place, ample and careful notes are kept, with opinions and comments thereon. The notes of the "clever Secretary" after the interviews must be useful and informing reading.

* *Ibid*, P. 297.

Was it an accident or part of a deliberate plan that Sir James Crerar became the Home Secretary of the Government of India when the Mahatma became an All-India menace? Sir James Crerar was not a *persona grata* of Lord Irwin, Gandhi's friend. The Secretary of the Home Department, Sir (then Mr.) Harry Haig who was succeeded by Sir H. W. (then Mr.) Emerson, now Governor of the U. P. and Governor of the Punjab, respectively, were in the good graces of Lord Irwin, now an influential member of the British Cabinet, with whom Sir Samuel Hoare's leader, Mr. Stanley Baldwin, shares his inmost confidence.

Was it again an accident or part of a deliberate plan that Lord Willingdon was sent out as Viceroy by the King to deal with Gandhi and his movement if he proved a slippery customer after the Gandhi-Irwin pact was signed and the Mahatma's attending the Round Table Conference? After Gandhi's revelation in his autobiography of the epoch-making conversation that he had with Lord Willingdon's Secretary, did his Majesty's Government send for the ancient files? Had Lord Willingdon predicted the danger that the Mahatma was going to be, nearly a quarter of a century ago as Bombay Governor? Had he made any suggestions to prevent the danger? The Mahatma's autobiography contained a clue to kill his movement. He definitely stated in it how to him the first advent of Satyagraha came with the frank disclosure of his All-India intentions to the Secretary of Lord Willingdon and his Government. Sir James Crerar as the Home Member especially during the Irwin regime of many Ordinances and Lord Willingdon as the Viceroy put up an unyielding fight against Disobedience until they defeated it and caused an

unprecedented panic in the minds of the non-cooperators who have abandoned it, at any rate for a few years. As a Liberal, Lord Willingdon believes in reforms, Morley's policy of "rallying the moderates" and has Montagu's faith in Responsible Government for India. But Morley also believed in harrying the Extremists. So did Montagu.

The Mahatma has disclosed in *The Story of My Experiments With Truth* that it was "an event," in Lord Willingdon's regime as the Governor of Bombay, which he regarded as "the advent of Satyagraha in India." It is an event in the history of India that an erstwhile Provincial Governor should have been sent out as Viceroy to end the Satyagraha movement. With the advent of the Congressmen to the Councils it is certain now that Civil Disobedience for Swaraj is out of the question for the next two years if not more. Therefore, so far as Lord Willingdon's Viceregal regime is concerned, we have heard the last of political civil disobedience. In the meantime the Mahatma will not resort *even* to Temple-entry Satyagraha.

It may be that the Swarajists may "walk out" of the Assembly but two years will be too short a period for the repetition of Satyagraha especially as the Congress is suffering from the inevitable *ennui* that follows a big campaign. The lull will survive Lord Willingdon's regime.

The Satyagraha Ashram at Sabarmati came into existence during Lord Willingdon's Governorship. Its total disbandment has taken place in his Viceroyalty —when the Mahatma abandoned political Satyagraha and became the founder of the Servants of the Untouchables.

In the inscrutable dispensation of Providence, India has been an untouchable among the nations of the world, outside the family of the free nations and treated as an outhouse of the British Empire, because fifty millions of India's population have in the name of religion been condemned as untouchables. No one has contributed so much as the great Mahatma for the making of Modern India in the plane of politics and action. The awakening that we see on all sides, the courage, the spirit to do and dare, the desire to walk erect in the comity of nations—all these have been deeply stirred by the Satyagraha movement.

The Mahatma's political mission has concluded. It cannot be said to have failed, though it has not prevailed in the manner in which the Mahatma would have wished. It has succeeded in rousing the people from their torpor. They have shaken off the rust and dust of ages. And the new Government under a new constitution can, with public approval, declare untouchability illegal and with the force of law kill that outrage practised in the name of religion. It is interesting to note that it was Lord Willingdon's Government that circulated Mahatma's Temple Entry Bill. Thus beneath the conflict between the Mahatma and Lord Willingdon there is also a point of contact.

Given wisdom and tolerance and foresight, a permanent bridge can be built between the opponents of British rule in India and His Majesty's Government. The immediate objective of the Congress appears to be to revive the forgotten Gandhi-Irwin pact of which federation is a fundamental. As Provincial Autonomy precedes the adumbration of Federation, is it possible that the Congress may yet have

an opportunity of bringing that "Constituent Assembly" into existence if they do not pit the Congress determination against British determination in the passionate pursuit of self-determination which will be a will-o'-the-wisp so long as communities are determined to wallow in the mire of communalism ?

CHAPTER XXIV.

A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY.

London, Oct. 12.—Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain said that the Conservatives should recollect that if in consequence of differences in the party, Socialists were allowed to come in, Mr. Lansbury had stated that they would immediately call a Constituent Assembly in India and hand over to it the formation of a constitution for India.

Those who talked about Government's proposals constituting surrender of India should recollect that the greatest danger lay not in any Government proposals but the possible advent to power of a Socialist Government.—*Reuter*.

The Congress mandate to its men in the Legislature is not to spoil their politics by staging a communal fight on the question of the Communal Award as a large section of the Muslims has accepted it. Of course, Mr. Jinnah has not secured his "fourteen points." Mr. Jinnah himself has been very unhappy about the apathy of the Congress. Had the Hindus accepted Mr. Jinnah's points, then there would have been Hindu-Muslim unity with Mr. Jinnah as Muslim leader ready to accept the Congress demand. But can Mr. Jinnah deliver the goods so far as the Muslims are concerned even if the Hindus supported the Congress demand? Mr. Jinnah is undoubtedly one of the most respected Muslim leaders in India; but when the Congress leaders say that they would not take up the Communal Award, will Mr. Jinnah agree to their not grasping the nettle? The Congress leaders think that the time for considering the

communal award is now premature but will arrive when the Constituent Assembly is convened.

If there is a long interval between the inauguration of the Provincial and the Central Constitution, the Congress may put up candidates to capture the Provincial Councils and power. After getting a majority will they refuse to accept office? After accepting office in the Provinces will they play the part of Mr. de Valera, if their demand at the Centre is not accepted by the Government? Whatever their provincial plan—they themselves do not know it at present—that they want to come into the constitutional picture before it is completely filled in is certain. That is the only explanation for their decision to go to the Assembly before the introduction or the inauguration of the Hoare scheme of reforms.

The princes and their representatives will be summoned to London in order to complete the Federal constitution. Federation being the pivot on which the "Gandhi-rwin pact" moves—though Lord Willingdon has nowhere recognized it or referred to it—the advocates of the summoning of the so-called Constituent Assembly to frame the constitution which is the main Congress demand, will certainly expect the representation of the Swaraj Party in London. Its President, Dr. M. A. Ansari, was not wanted for the Round Table Conferences. The Congress Muslims were disappointed when Dr. Ansari was left out. Now, he cannot be left out as he is the Founder-President of the New Swaraj Party. Dr. Ansari will not go by himself without Mahatma Gandhi. Lord Willingdon had declined to see the Mahatma till he had abandoned the Civil Disobedience Movement. There is no such obstacle now in the way of the Mahatma and the Viceroy meeting.

The Swaraj Party will in a constitutional manner press their demand early in 1935 during the winter session of the Legislative Assembly. They will say that though chosen by a narrow electorate, still they represent public opinion in the country. They will declare in Dr. Ansari's words at the Ranchi Conference that the opportunities they had under the existing electoral machinery to secure the result were "undoubtedly extremely restricted inasmuch as the electorate to the Assembly is confined to about 13 lakhs of people whereas the adult population of British India exceeds 15 crores." Dr. Ansari said that "even though we have limited opportunities, we can achieve considerable results in reflecting the mind of this electorate.....That in itself will be an achievement which will be more easily understood in *England*." The italics are important. The Civil Disobedience Movement laid the emphasis on *India*. Now the Congress Parliamentary Party have shifted the emphasis. It is of *England* that they are thinking. This itself shows that they are becoming practical.

As the Constitution is being shaped in England, the Congress had hoped to have their way by bringing pressure to bear on Whitehall through Civil Disobedience. As it failed to impress, they have gone back to the good old plan of bringing constitutional pressure by producing a mandate of the people. Lord Irwin did not question the Swarajist credentials, when he had a talk over a cup of tea with Gandhi and the late Pundit Motilal Nehru in the late President Patel's house and offered them "predominant" representation at the Round Table Conference. Why they did not agree to bury the hatchet over—or is it under—a cup of tea will always remain one of the baffling questions in the history of India's struggle for freedom. They are returning to the Assembly to repeat the

same old demand. If the reforms at the Centre are to be delayed for another two or three years and if there are to be more Conferences in London, Lord Willingdon and Sir Samuel Hoare might agree to give representation to the Swaraj Party and the Congress through Dr. Ansari and Mahatma Gandhi.

The diehards and Mr. Winston Churchill are for delaying the reforms at the Centre until the only aggressive party in India, namely the Congress, comes forward to work them. It is the hope of a section of the Congress to establish contact with His Majesty's Government with the idea of embodying the spirit of the Gandhi-Irwin pact in the Central scheme of the new Constitution. If, however, Whitehall does not propose to persuade the river which has flown ahead for the last four years to turn back upon its course, Congressmen will have lost a golden opportunity. They can only report to their constituents that the Constituent Assembly has not been granted by the British Government. But there is nothing to prevent them summoning one themselves. As their purpose is to draw up a constitution, there is nothing to prevent their drawing up another All-Party constitution or improve on the one drawn up under the presidentship of the late Pundit Motilal Nehru. The only serious objections to that document were: *first*, its scheme of a federation and the relation of the Government of India with the Princes; *secondly*, the communal settlement which displeased the Muslims and disappointed the Sikhs. If the Congress means business, it will have to tackle the communal problem first. Unless it is solved the cry of self-determination sounds rather bombastic. This is in a way admitted by Mr. Bulabhai Desai who, the Swarajists made clear at Ranchi, should be the leader of the Opposition in the Assembly. According to their future leader, "if

we call ourselves Nationalists—and we can describe ourselves by no other name—then we should frame for the voluntary acceptance by the Government, proposals adopted by a Constituent Assembly *of our own*. (Applause)."

Is this Constituent Assembly then to be an unofficial body of the Princes and the people? Suppose the Princes do not join it until the Congress abandons the goal of independence or *Purna Swaraj*. Without Indian India,—and with federation as an irrevocable feature of the Gandhi-Irwin pact—a non-official Constituent Assembly no doubt useful as an election stunt, does not seem a practical proposition. If an official Constituent Assembly is not forthcoming, a non-official one can always be convened for British India only. In other words, another All-Party Conference. But why should the Swarajists await the presentation of their demand to Britain to summon this Conference? Has not the Secretary of State himself said that if a better thing than the Communal Award—Pundit Malaviya feels humiliated by the expression *award*!—is forthcoming with the stamp of approval of the various communities, before the new Government of India Bill is introduced, His Majesty's Government will have no hesitation to substitute the agreed scheme for their own handiwork?

The Congress is not confident whether it will succeed in producing one more agreeable and acceptable to the conflicting communities that go to make the Indian Nation. Mr. Desai spoke with sorrow at Ranchi which his fellow-countrymen of all patriotic schools will share, about the communal tragedy, the lack of amity that is visible to us. "All their efforts," said he, "must be directed towards creating conditions under which the Constituent Assembly would be called."

It is to be hoped that it will not be an Assembly of cats whose constituency is a sub-continental Kilkenny. "If", as Mr. Desai said, "religion is not meant for the promotion of political controversy or securing political adjustment, let there be a community of faith under the Fatherhood of the same God." If the new-gospellers are not so godly, let there be that consummation under the Motherhood of the Nation. Well might Mr. Desai grieve: "Never before had been witnessed a communal spectacle that they had seen in the country of prophets and saints."

Let the Constituent Assembly finish the noble task of Guru Nanak. In politics, time is of the essence, but nation-building takes time. Rome was not built in a day. That must not discourage our idealists, for unceasing must be the effort to bring about a United Indian Nation and abolish the communal jealousies, suspicions and quarrels for loaves and fishes. As great as the work for the emancipation of the untouchables will be the task of uniting various communities. When such a communal unity is achieved, Britain will not stand in the way of India coming into her own. The Commander-in-Chief's principal objection to the rapid Indianization of the Army is based on the "communal spectacle" to which Mr. Desai frankly referred at the Swarajist Conference. "The failure of the Round Table Conference," of which the Swarajists speak from a thousand platforms, to fulfil the expectations of the Congress, is due to the fact that India has not yet risen from what she is to what her prophets like Guru Nanak wished her to be. To that also is due the failure of the Civil Disobedience movement. India is still feeling and acting communally. When will she think nationally? Then the question will arise whether she is a "Lost Dominion." Sir Samuel Hoare

believes in his White Paper scheme not as India lost but India gained.

The Congressmen are not without doubts about themselves. That they do not trust as to what will happen to the Swarajists is clear from the fact that a section of the Congress still does not want them to go to the Councils, though it has surrendered to the Mahatma. There is nothing doing by way of civil disobedience. No more political work except speeches in the Assembly on a variety of subjects—from maternity benefit to the rejection of the White Paper. The Socialists of the Congress were placated at Ranchi by a long list of labour reforms proposals which can be put through only by patient, plodding legislators and not pedestrian politics. Therefore "walk out" must be ruled out for Socialistic—as different from Communistic—purposes. But after the rejection of the White Paper reforms by an Assembly resolution—or the failure to pass it—will the Congress people leave their seats like shining lamps of non-co-operation? This would appeal to their own extremists whose apprehension, however, is that after condemning the White Paper they will stay "to tinker with it" as the Bombay Parsee Congressman, Mr. Nariman, to the embarrassment of some, ruthlessly spoke out at Ranchi.

The Congress apparently shares this apprehension. That is why it proposes to keep a watch over the activities of the Swarajists who, however, agree to be subjected to surveillance as the price for Congress support without which they will be nowhere in the country. The Swarajists therefore are but the sappers and miners of the Mahatma's army. If they play their cards properly, many hope, its wiser and sadder men will succeed in establishing a contact between the Viceroy

and Gandhi. As "the sole delegate of the Congress," he may yet be hoping and praying that it would be given to him to bring about a permanent understanding between England and Britain, for the Gandhi-Irwin pact is the foundation of *Purna Swaraj* which the Congress moderates would interpret as independence within the British Empire or Dominion Status *plus* the Statute of Westminster. By returning to the Assembly and reaffirming their oath of allegiance to the King-Emperor of India, his heirs and successors, the Congress has lowered the flag of independence and thus stooped to conquer. If Lord Willingdon in a sporting spirit could help those who had embarrassed his administration by extinguishing the life of last Assembly, some Swarajists feel that His Excellency could be trusted to encourage them in their constitutional quest which they can later on describe to their constituents as a conquest. In politics discretion is the best policy. The Swarajists are politicians but their minds are not chainless. They are bound hand and foot to the Congress. They are its messengers. That is their strength. That is also their weakness, because they are not free agents. Before the Central Constitution is adopted, the Congress has sent them to represent their case to the Viceroy in a proper way.

The future is full of interest. A new spirit will dominate the Assembly. Constitutionalism has once again revealed its sweet, if sometimes wry, face.

CHAPTER XXV

THE BRITISH CONNEXION

"Referring to Mr. Neville Chamberlain's warning as to what would happen if the Socialists came in Sir Henry Page-Croft declared no constitutional Government would survive in any country if it abandoned its principles from fear that the Socialists or Communists might go further in future. He added: *Despite prophecies of evil, I prefer to lose few ministers than India.*"—*Reuter.*

Whatever the future of the White Paper Scheme, the future of India and British connexion is at the bottom of the trouble which the British diehards and the Indian idealists create. The diehard is convinced that the White Paper will blow up the Empire in India which has made the lives of several families in England different from what they would otherwise have been as Mr. Winston Churchill has been tirelessly saying. The *Morning Post* which is more friendly to Mr. Baldwin than Mr. Churchill so far as Conservative leadership and personal loyalty go has become an exponent of the latter's faith. It says that a small Island people cannot live without a big Empire which will cease to exist without India. Mr. Lloyd George told me in 1927: "You had the Empire of Asoka; the Empire of the Moghuls." And now the Empire of Britain has us. Even the Socialists take a pride in the British Empire. The wife of a Socialist M. P. told me while she and her husband were dining with me in Piccadilly Hotel on Christmas eve in 1929—when I was casually mentioning a chapter of my book, *India: Peace or War*, which was under preparation and published later by Harraps—"you mean *our* rule in India." The emphasis on *our* was not

hers, but the words sounded in my ears as rather significant. "Yes, *your* rule," I added, with a smile and a polite emphasis. "It must cease to be *your* rule; it must be *our* rule." Otherwise the war-mentality of our people will continue.

It is this war-mentality that troubles both Mr. Churchill and Sir Samuel Hoare. The diehards who have rallied to Mr. Churchill's banner and many of those who are not diehards fear that that mentality of the anti-British Indians will thrive on the White Paper reforms. They have not the slightest doubt that autonomy for Indian provinces which are as large as countries in Europe will put into the hands of their uncompromising enemies all the resources of the Provincial Governments to finance anti-British propaganda. Therefore they say that while not objecting to the transfer of power—subject to reservations in regard to Police—in the provincial sphere, they will not part with their present authority at the Centre, in order to keep—until the war-mentality of the Congress changes which they think will never happen—the present supremacy of Britain.

The White Paper Scheme keeps these reservations for the preservation of tranquillity and peace. The Governor is endowed with Ordinance-making powers. He has the right of differing with the Minister for Law and Order and asserting his authority over the head of the Cabinet and the Legislature. This does not satisfy the diehards who say it must be explicitly provided and directly asserted. Mr. Churchill told me that the Governors of Provinces must be vested with the right of appointing Deputy Governors should Law and Order threaten to break down. Mr. Churchill will start Provincial autonomy for Bengal and Bombay and the United Provinces with Deputy

Governors. These provinces have witnessed in recent years formidable public uprising. There may be a danger. The Congress still aspires to "live dangerously," as Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru once put it in his rousing address to the young men in the Universities who adore him as an idol—more than an idol, one should say, in these irreverent days when there is a vigorous search for its clay feet. The diehards are honestly upset about the rapid and unrestrained concessions which the Conservative leaders have made to Indian feelings.

The doubts of the diehards are inwardly shared by the Conservatives themselves—even by Lord Irwin who insisted on "safeguards" in the Gandhi-Irwin pact, though the Mahatma insisted that they should be demonstrably "in India's interests."

Any constitutional lawyer, who will pronounce an impartial judgment on the Gandhi-Irwin pact—probably the Government of India or England have taken expert opinion on it!—will say that Gandhi has scored.

That pact is only a step towards *Purna Swaraj* for the Congress, even for constitutionally-minded Congressmen. When Sir Harry Haig once blurted out in the Assembly that the Congress will have to eschew independence, he got into hot waters with the Opposition. The present writer, who led the opposition then, took him to task. Sir Abdur Rahim, the Independent Party leader, followed suit—all were united in asking whether the cherishing of independence was not legitimate for Indians. Should they not have the right of dreaming about a Free and Independent United States of India? The alert Home Member immediately clarified the issue. Not that the Government could object to the cherishing of an ideal, but no

British Government would tolerate the programme of independence which involved disobedience of laws and disturbances in the country. While India is entitled to dream of independence—"it is pleasant to dream," as Sir Surendranath Bannerjee used to say in his Demosthenian orations before huge Congress audiences—year after year even Gandhi has recognised that it will not be in the region of practical politics. That is why he came down from the clouds of idealism and among the clouds of Simla conducted negotiations with the representative of Britain with a mind and a brain free from the clouds of political prejudice, of which he alone of the Congress leaders is capable of possessing, gifted as he is with that spiritual capacity for detachment, given only to our seers and mahatmas as the writer told the Socialist Ministers and especially Mr. Wedgwood Benn with whom he had several conversations in 1929.

The Socialists, however, have not the same enthusiasm now for Gandhi. Lord Snell definitely told the writer last year, that "Gandhi has missed the Bus." Whether it is so or not, will depend on the ability and tact of the newcomers to the Assembly with the blessings of Gandhi and the Congress. Whether they will rely on rhetoric and hard words which break no bones, whether they will also believe in diplomacy which is the best politics is more than one can predict.

The immediate future apart, what is the future of India and of Britain? Disraeli was responsible for the famous phrase "inscrutable dispensation of Providence" to which he attributed India and Britain coming together. Had the Conservatives listened more to the diehards, there would have been no reforms, no White Paper, no Provincial autonomy and no

Federation. The idea of an All-India Federation is said to have originated in the Scottish idealism of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald. Scotsmen see visions, though Mr. MacDonald is no visionary. They are capable of moving with the times as a recent paper on India read by Sir James Crerar in London amply illustrates. He has no use for the excessive caution of the diehards. He is prepared to take a reasonable risk by releasing real power to the popular governments in the vast Provinces of India. Sir John Thompson appeared on a public platform in Mr. Churchill's own constituency and supported Indian claims for progress.

Lest the progress should be too fast, the Federation while giving to Indians the opportunity, for the first time in history, of having a common Government, will ensure to the British the presence of a large number of representatives from the States who will serve as breaks and buffers. This makes some Indians look with suspicion on a Federation.

The Muslims in British India have not been enthusiastic about the Federation. Their representation, so far as British India goes, at the Centre, in the Cabinet and Legislature, could be fixed by Statute but they understand the impracticability of seeking any such allotment in the All-India Federation. The Princes are non-Muslims in the main. Even if a communal allotment to which the Princes will not care to agree were made, the Muslim proportion in a purely British India Government and Legislature will be higher than in a pan-Indian Federation.

The Federation appeals to the British Conservatives because it will be a steady factor. It attracts the Indian Nationalist because what Mr. de Valera has yet to achieve by way of a United Ireland which is the ambition of Irish Nationalism, is granted to

India without going through the same chaos of suffering and strife as Ireland. No wonder, it is a part of the Gandhi-Irwin pact.

The Federation has captivated the bulk of Hindus who believe in British connexion and Dominion Status, because it is an enemy of independence and propaganda for the severance of British connexion.

The Hindu Maha Sabha hopes to revive the great days of Hinduism under the auspices of a Federation. The Maha Sabha votaries feel, as a keen observer* has put it, that "the glories of the Great Moghuls were dim and faded before the English Trading Company had gained a firm foothold in India. But 70,000,000 Indian Moslems still dream of their golden Empire and plan for the grand revival, while their brother sons of Islam lurk in Afghanistan, alert and ready to pour through the Khyber and "by the sword spread the Faith" and follow the commands of Mohammed: "Kill them wheresoever ye find them and thrust them out from whence they thrust you out; for dissent is worse than slaughter;—if they fight you, then kill them; such is the reward of the infidels!"

A feature of the latest Civil Disobedience movement was the participation in it by the Frontier Muslims known as Red Shirts. The last Afghan War coincided with the last non-co-operation movement when Gandhi came to the forefront of Indian politics with his gospel which inspired myriads. When the peace negotiations were being conducted in India, when the Afghan representatives had gone to Mussoorie, Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru was served with a notice under Section 144 to leave the place.

*"India and the British." By Mrs. Patricia Kendall (Scribner's, London.) (Page 110).

Pundit Jawaharlal never feared the Afghan menace. He said it was exaggerated for political purposes.

Punditjee's optimism is not shared by the Punjab Hindus of whom Bhai Parmanand is the spokesman. Punditjee is apparently so full of antipathy for the British that he would not mind a change of masters, should it come to that, for he hopes to overthrow any temporary Muslim rule with the power that overthrew British rule.

Is Punditjee himself such a rank extremist? Is he more extreme in his nationalism than General Botha and General Smuts could have been when South Africa went to war with England and accepted Dominion Home Rule? Punditjee has not even gone to war, he has only gone to jail, over and over again, in the enthusiasm of his nationalism. He has not associated with the revolutionaries who believe in what they declare to be "a war of independence." In these days of inter-dependence, the cry of independence is dangerous nonsense from a Socialistic point of view, for Socialism has no boundaries.

Moreover India, a poor country, cannot find for many a long year the money needed for the protection of her long sea-board. That is even more vulnerable than her north-west frontier. Her last and latest invader came by the sea. Maritime nations with a modern navy can always rob India of her freedom arising from Punditjee's imaginary overthrow of the *Raj*. No one knows this more than Punditjee whose future is cast in the Legislatures to work out his Socialistic programme, if he becomes practical.

Punditjee has a cross-bencher mentality which those who form an opinion of him only from his speeches are so little aware of. This mentality had saved the Congress in the past from many a bad

split. When the Swarajists revolted and preached Council entry, Punditjee, though a No-changer in his sympathies, firmly discountenanced the No-changer's intransigence. He constituted the Centre Party of which Dr. Ansari became the President when it captured the Working Committee of the Congress.

Had Punditjee been free, he would not have opposed the Ranchi programme of Council entry. In fact, he was responsible for bringing the Swaraj Party, the rebel-child of the Congress, back into the fold and imposing upon it its paternal whim.

The Council entry programme, if persisted in, with Punditjee's enthusiasm for ameliorating the condition of the peasants, Parties can spring into existence. There will be one party, the Congress then. It is clear that the Congress definitely wants a "Parliamentary Wing." For the first time, it has clearly used that expression and profited by the past folly of a split in the camp which helps only its opponents.

As there will be no atmosphere for the revival of disobedience, at any rate, for another decade, judging from past experience, human nature and the inclination of even the Congress fire-brands, party politics have come to stay for all practical purposes. In politics, it is futile to see farther than ten years ahead. Now that a Congress Party has been definitely formed, there will be another Party opposed to the Congress, by whatever name it may be called.

The purpose of the White Paper Scheme was to create Party in India. The origin of the safeguards is rooted in the fear that there was only one Party in India, the Congress and the other Party was the British Government, an official body. Once powerful

parties arise in India, the safeguards will dwindle and disappear.

The Congress, probably, does not share this optimism. That is why it retains its individuality instead of merging it in the Swaraj Party. It wants to keep its hold on the people by "its constructive programme," its Spinners' Association, its Servants of the Untouchables.

Until the mentality of the Congress changes, or an equally strong rival comes into the field, the progress of Indian reforms will be blocked by safeguards. Every attempt at revolution will be resisted with all the might of Britain.

The power of the Congress itself will wane when its leaders taste power in the Provinces, to begin with.

Much depends, however, on the amount of power, which, in actual working, will be assigned to the people. The White Paper Scheme is incomplete yet. The rules have to be framed. The instrument of instructions is yet in the making.

In his extraordinary evidence, showing vast preparation and careful marshalling of facts, that for a number of days he gave before the Joint Parliamentary Committee, Sir Samuel Hoare has revealed how each remote contingency and every petty detail have not escaped the eagle eye of His Majesty's Government. The Conservatives are assured that the ultimate authority of Britain and Parliament would remain inviolate if Indians do not play the game as Britain would like them to play it. The distressed die-hards shake their heads. To them all Indians are tarred with the same brush. They would, therefore, either keep India as an armed camp or lose it. There is no such word as "half-way house" in their vocabulary. They would "govern or get out."

CHAPTER XXVI.

PUNDITJEE AND A RED HERRING.

"Instead of bringing forward constructive ideas and plans, is it the task of a first-class statesman to make his suggestions understandable to a sheep-fold of duffers with a view to securing their assent?"

ADOLF HITLER in *Mein Kampf*.

"It is not possible to speak strongly enough against those miserable profiteers who turn to religion as a means of furthering their political or business interests."

Ibid.

Since the foregoing pages were penned, events in India have been progressing rapidly. The Congress history has repeated itself and with it the trick of Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviya.

The Pundit, I wrote eighteen years ago in the Lucknow *Advocate*, would find his occupation gone if there were no disunity, because he was the apostle of unity. When the Congress was uniting on Council entry,—which it failed to do to the pain of C. R. Das—Punditjee decided to appear as a disrupting factor only to preach unity!

"I am all for unity with the Mahatma," says he. Only he was taking up religion as an election cry.

There should be no legislative interference with religion, says he. The Temple Entry Bill is bad because it interferes with religion. The Anti-Untouchability Bill is mad, because don't-touchism is the basis on which Hinduism rests. The Sarda Act was a sad piece of legislation, because religion says that

the orthodox caste girls must be wedded and bear children before they are fourteen years old. How could Legislatures interfere with laws made by man-gods and god-men that wrote the pages of Manu Dharma and other Shastras? The progress of India must be resisted by Religion—which is elastic as india-rubber!

The Pundit has every right and so too the army of *Purohits* who hail him to-day as a Saviour,—to do what they like. But why did he run away from the Legislature when religion was in danger? Why did he go to jail on a political issue when Hinduism itself was menaced? Why again did he walk into the trap of Civil Disobedience when the fate of the Hindu community was trembling in the balance in Whitehall?

If non-interference with religion was a good election cry, the Communal Award was another stick to beat the Congress with. Orthodoxy accuses the Mahatma as having made it worse by fasting-unto-death to have the Poona Pact incorporated in it. The Pundit recognizes that the Award has become sacred to the Congress because of the by-product of Gandhi's fast-unto-death. The wise statesmen of Britain readily accepted the Mahatma's formula and incidentally saved his life.

The awakening of Pundit Malaviya has been one of the marvels of Indian politics. But who asked him to leave the beaten track for Satyagraha, to go back on his experience of a life-time and weep over spilt milk? Perhaps he wanted the milk to be spilt—otherwise how could the venerable Pundit indulge in the luxury of lamentations? Can he recover lost ground by his political swan-songs?

He could not gull the electorate by pandering to its unthinking mind full of unreasoned prejudice. This is so not only in India but all the world over.* But can he undo the mischief that has been done ?

The proper thing for every Hindu leader of eminence who preferred cheap martyrdom in India to difficult and delicate negotiations in England was to have seen to it that judgment did not go by default.

Britain gave the Communal Award because Indians scandalously failed to adjust their communal differences. Some of the best minds of India were no doubt present at the Round Table Conference—but they were Muslim ones mainly.

The Hindu minds were developing soul-force behind iron bars. The cage was their hermitage. They are now angry because events did not await their convenience, because time and tide declined to take orders from Punditjee and the Congress.

Had Punditjee cared more for his community, he should have met the Muslims on their own ground and gone to England right from the beginning.

It was possible for the Muslims to tell England and the world that they were friends of Britain and as such they had every right and reason to expect her to show them true consideration.

If the Communal Award has done an injustice to the Hindus, the responsibility must be laid at the door of Hindu leadership—its utter ineptitude, its lack of courage, its love of lime-light and cheap popularity.

Had Pundit Malaviya and Mr. Aney—whose patriotism is as great as their judgment is poor—been

*“Capable as it is of great political sense in emergency, in normal times the British people is governed like other peoples by clap-trap beliefs.”—*Review of Reviews*, September 1934.

really earnest about seeing justice done to the Hindus, they should have worked as patiently and indefatigably as the Muslim leaders at the Round Table Conference.

The Hindu representatives were treated with *sans ceremonie* because they had no authority behind them. The Hindu Maha Sabha was eclipsed by the Congress whose importance Punditjee and Mr. Aney increased by submerging themselves and their orthodox followers into the Satyagraha whirlpool which swallowed up the Hindu cause. The responsibility for weakening and destroying the case of the Hindus must rest with these new-fangled, electioneering Communal Award enthusiasts.

The Congress could have been left to plough the desert of civil disobedience. It might have been allowed to try the experiment of making the desert blossom. Meantime the true friends of the Hindu community could have usefully occupied their time in fighting every inch of ground in England with the united authority of a cultured, organised and enlightened community of constitutionally-minded people.

The Muslims themselves would have been compelled by the weight of public opinion to come to terms with the authorized spokesmen of the Hindu community.

Punditjee thundered from a score of platforms: "All is not lost. We can yet present the case of the Hindu community to the House of Commons after the Joint Select Committee Report is published." This is like boycotting the lower Courts and the High Courts and doing everything to ruin the case of the client finally relying on an appeal to the Privy Council.

The issue had deliberately been clouded for the purposes of the General Election. The possibility of

a clean fight on a clear-cut issue was totally marred by drawing the red herring of Communal Award across the trail of current politics.

Under ordinary circumstances there would have been two parties in the country—the Congress and the Anti-Congress. At present, Punditjee has done all that lies in his power to capture the non-Congress votes though all the time calling himself a Congressman. Thus he has prevented the growth of party politics without which Parliamentary Responsible Government will prove definitely unworkable, unthinkable, impossible and incomprehensible.

As a piece of diplomacy to secure maximum votes for Congress-minded—not Hindu-minded—people, to the Aney-Malaviya campaign no exception could be taken. That was the one way to secure the votes of the public for a Congress clique. Those who were opposed to the Congress would vote for Malaviya, because they were opposed to the Communal Award. They would not pause to think that it was boycotters like Pundit Malaviya who enforced by their aloofness the Communal Award, who forced by their anti-British fervour and their noisy slogans Britain into Muslim hands. None can blame Britain for befriending one community, when the leaders and the vocal section of the other community would ask for their expulsion “bag and baggage.”

Punditjee now says: “We are not anti-British. Nor are we disloyal. Are we not taking the oath of Allegiance to the King-Emperor by entering the legislature?” The new accents are an improvement on the old. But for how long? Had Punditjee confined himself to PARLIAMENTARY ACTION—as I told him before he performed his famous Fox Trot from the Assembly—leaving it to his rival king of Allahabad

the other Punditjee who is no longer with us, to go into the pitless pit of Civil Disobedience—the Congressmen would not have had the misfortune of being disgraced and discredited by internal feuds whereas the Hindus would have certainly had the good fortune of the leadership of an esteemed veteran who would have won respect for himself and the cause of his community because his life has been a sermon on service and sacrifice even though he does not possess a first-class original brain.

Punditjee was never popular with the non-Congressmen. An old Congressman himself, his place was among old Congressmen, constitutionalists to the core. By leaving them for the fresh woods of Civil Disobedience, he lost touch with them. He also lost his way.

By going to the prison, Punditjee did not increase his price in the market-place. If he leaves out the Communal Award which is a good bazaar cry, his reputation in the Congress market is so low that it cannot buy an apple. Punditjee knows it. While every time taking shelter behind Gandhi's loin-cloth—I would have used the word arm-chair but the Mahatma is too paleolithic to use that rather modern convenience—and telling India that he is out for a compromise, Punditjee asks us to forget how he compromised the Hindu cause by giving to an extremist party and ephemeral popularity what was meant for his community and the permanent settlement of the communal problem in the most satisfactory manner possible under the circumstances.

"Madan Mohan has missed the Bus," his conscience must be telling him. Obviously he hoped to cover the distance in Rolls Royce—a non-stop oration or a tremendous resolution or a scintillating amendment

on the Communal Award in the imposing presence of the Treasury Benches, when he comes to the Assembly.

Punditjee has yet a great Mission if only he will stick to it and not gallop again towards the abyss of Congress politics. He cannot run with the Hindu hare and hunt with the Congress hounds unless, of course, for election purposes. Anything is fair in election politics. If, however, he means to do some lasting good to a community for whose uplift and welfare he has for long years worked, he can lay the foundation for the alteration of the Award, if not immediately, at least a decade hence.

For another ten years the Communal Award will last, because the Muslims are not prepared to be fooled and the pressure of public opinion on which Punditjee and Congress relied is no longer available. Moreover, the Congress has repudiated Punditjee's views on the Award.

Ten years, however, are not a long span in a nation's, if in Punditjee's, career. And Punditjee can start National Conventions and long confabulations on communal amity and thus leave "his foot-prints on the sands of time."

Probably Punditjee lives for the moment and not the future. Otherwise he would have a settled plan and not have run into the morass of Civil Disobedience for which there was no dearth of men, in which he did not believe and of which he has not said one inspiring thing. He was not able to put up with the ordeal of suffering in jail to the same extent as the orthodox Congressmen. He had neither the training nor the faith which sustains. He went into the movement because he had not the capability or the self-confidence to make action inside the legislatures as

attractive as Gandhi's performance outside. He had a splendid opportunity not only to impress India as Deshabandhu Das did in the Bengal Council, he had also the opportunity to lead Jayakar and Sapru combined and arrive at an understanding with Jinnah and the Agha Khan and be remembered in history as the greatest Nation-builder that Indian statesmanship could produce. But Punditjee preferred a shadow-land of unreality and evanescent applause, governed by martyrs and wind-bags and ghosts who were willing to make use of him and laugh behind his back.

The Congress is really run by the young men who exploit and use Gandhi who himself has said he is "fed up" with their patent hypocrisies and insincerities—because he is a spiritual revolutionary with no axes of his own to grind. Punditjee is unfit to play even at mock-revolution. He is a moderate incapable of extremism although he is afraid to put his own convictions against it. C. R. Das sacrificed wealth to serve the Congress. Pundit Motilal Nehru suspended his practice in the Congress cause though took care not to spurn the goods of the world like his Bengalee colleague, as they were necessary even from a modern communist point of view. But Punditjee sacrificed his convictions which is greater than the sacrifice of wealth and profession. He always believed in "the collective wisdom of the Congress" and "the totality of circumstances."

His politics and plans for the Assembly will be just what they were. His men will out-do the Congress in extremism. They went out of the Legislature on the Tariff issue. They will revive it—wage a wordy war against Ottawa agreement—reciprocal preferences—and quote from his own Minute of Dissent in the Industrial Commission Report and go back to the

nineteenth century and quote Horace Hayman Wilson and the Welby Commission Report. Thus their hostility will be quite as bitter as that of the Congress with which they will vie and vote except on the Communal Award which will be the subject of discussion once in three years and if the life of the new Assembly is to be extended by one year as that of the last one has been, they may as a glorious election ruse have a whole non-official day to discuss the future of the Communal Award and thus fulfil their promise at the hustings.

That way they can be in the lime-light. The Congress press will not attack them then as they attacked the late C. R. Das when he dared to differ from Mahatma Gandhi. But if Punditjee wants to help his community and change the pro-Muslim policy of the Government—which they have mapped out, it would appear, for the next two decades—he must leave the Congress to itself and hold the key-position of the nation of which the Legislative Assembly is certainly the centre. Instead of delighting to dwell among the myths of the Congress and the ruins of Civil Disobedience, he can, if he has the will and the energy, build a truly National Party with a constructive plan and a constitutional programme.

The Hindu community wants a man of authority. Punditjee was undoubtedly that man. But he became afraid of the Congress which he mistook for public opinion. He lost his old authority which he can recover if he does not compete with the Congress but follows his own line and organizes a new force.

The chief defect of Punditjee's programme is that it lacks a plank and has a red-herring for a policy. The Communal Award must be given a more dignified position than that of a red-herring. It must serve a

higher purpose than an election cry. Punditjee himself must not lower his own idealism and cast an unholy reflection on the work that he did for his community in the past. His only place in politics is as the founder of the Hindu Maha Sabha, as excellent an institution as the All-India Muslim Conference. Both of which will die naturally with the birth of true nationalism. When Sabha and Conference bury the hatchet, say a decade hence, we shall have something in the nature of a Communal *Settlement* to which the Communal *Award* will yield place.

Punditjee's grievance is that it is only an award, something like a reward not a settlement. Let it then be a reward to the Muslims for good conduct during the bad days of revolutionary Civil Disobedience. Now that Punditjee has turned his back on revolution, he can yet give a good name to his community. That Mr. Jayakar should be afraid of contact with Punditjee's party is revelation enough that he is not sure yet of either Punditjee or his prospects.

Why is Punditjee so zealous about the Communal Award long after it was given? What had he been doing all the time? Why did he not go to London to prevent the giving of such an Award? Why did he facilitate the grant of that Award by going to sleep with his Hindu companions of the Congress when the Muslims were up and doing like the pious persistent pilgrim of John Bunyan? The following passage from *The Pilgrim's Progress* illustrates Punditjee's simplicity, Aney's *laissez faire* and the Congress Nationalists' vanity: "With that they looked upon him, and began to reply in this sort: SIMPLE said, '*I see no danger*'; SLOTH said, "*Yet a little more sleep*"; and PRESUMPTION said, '*Every vat must stand upon his own bottom.*' And so they lay down to sleep again and Christian went on his way."

Now that Punditjee has shaken off his sleep, he can follow a straight course. He must begin by abandoning the policy of serving two masters. One cannot serve both the Congress and the community at the same time was a thought which occurred to Bhai Parmanand, the President of the Hindu Maha Sabha, while facing the terrors of Port Blair, in the solitude of the Andamans.

When Bhajee went to England to put up a fight against the Communal Award, he knew that the battle was lost. He came to my flat in St. James Court one afternoon to tell me the sad story of how the game was up. He bitterly blamed the Congress for having put the Civil Disobedience cart before the Hindu Nationalist horse. Had Lala Lajpat Rai been alive, he had no doubt that Punditjee would have been saved for the community.

I told him that we wanted new men, for the age in which we lived was new and how I had successfully attempted a settlement with the Muslims in regard to the new Railway Authority of the future to avoid in the Railway Committee which was daily sitting at the India Office, the communal wrangles that disgraced the Round Table Conferences. Had the Hindu leaders not gone to pray in the jails but used their ability and behaved like men of action, Whitehall would have respected them and if it did not, they could have commanded respect by appealing to the British democracy. In his unregenerate days Punditjee used to compare the heart of the British democracy to the harp that responds to the harper's touch. His blunder lay in leaving the harmony of the harp for the fakirism of the Congress. Music is always inspiring. Magic in the long run is depressing.

CHAPTER XXVII

FROM GANDHI TO HITLER.

Nagpur, Sept. 28—The object of his present mission to Wardha was explained last night by the Congress President, Mr. V. J. Patel, who said that he was persuading M. Gandhi not to attend the Bombay Congress session so that the organisation may be effectively purged of all elements at present indicating a tendency towards insubordination and lack of discipline. Mr. Patel thought that the work of restoring purity and discipline in the Congress will be much facilitated if M. Gandhi was absent. The present factions in the Congress had utterly disgusted M. Gandhi who, therefore, had decided to retire from active leadership of the Congress.—A. P. I.

The Mahatma and the Sirdar and their chief associates are in the same mood to-day as Hitler was when he heard the news of the defeat of Germany in the last War,—the flight of Kaiser Wilhelm and the Crown-Prince to Holland, the sneaking away of Ludendorff to Sweden in disguise, the mutiny of the sailors at Kiel and Hamburg, the setting up all over the Fatherland of soldiers' and sailors' councils after the fashion of Soviet Russia, the formation of a Socialist Government and the flying of the red flag over the Berlin Palace.

Hitler heard the news while lying in Pasewalk in Pomerania, with no eyes to read newspapers, blinded by the fierce gas-attack of the British on October

13, 1918, south of Ypres. What the chaplain of the hospital was telling him sounded incredible. Was he a real German chaplain? He had no eyes to verify. But he was talking good German. Could it be true that the supermen of a warrior race were beaten in the battlefield? Was not the German army superhuman and therefore invincible? Hitler wept bitterly. The tears proved healers. He got back his sight.

He addressed meetings in the beer-halls of Munich. The beer-hall orator proved a menace. He started something like a Disobedience March on Berlin which was broken up. Hitler himself was thrown into prison. The funds and property of his party were confiscated, the loss amounting to £7,500*.

Hitler was sentenced for five years on 1st April 1924. Why the All Fools' Day was chosen for ushering him into prison was never explained but he was released nine months afterwards to celebrate a fire-side Christmas. The release was unconditional and secured by the intervention of the Vatican authorities. Hitler, therefore, was free to begin over again his political work.

In Hitler's "March on Berlin" is something akin to the Mahatma's march to the sea. In their defeat also there is something similar. In their early release again, the Government have exercised the same consideration. Hitler was not allowed to edit a newspaper from behind the prison walls but he was free to correspond. He was also permitted to write his biography which is not an 'experiment with truth' but with the dread realities of life,—more a record of his experiences, mental and physical, than the story of

**Mein Kampf*: by Adolf Hitler, p. 669.

his own life. It has since become the political bible of Germany.

Apart from methods, there is one difference between Hitler and Gandhi. Hitler was a young man of thirty-five but the Mahatma was nearly sixty-five. Age may not make a difference in certain men. The Mahatma still feels young. But his political pulse has admittedly grown sluggish. Also his brain power has decreased as his style shows. Otherwise the thought of retirement from the Congress and the unwillingness to face it which he overcame would not have been mentioned publicly nor felt privately.

The depression of the Mahatma found full vent in his statement. He felt that the bulk of the Congress had actually ceased to have confidence in him whatever their pretension for the purpose of exploiting his name. He also felt that there was demoralization made worse by dishonesty in the rank and file. He has not questioned their patriotism but his method has ceased to appeal to them. They do not even believe in khaddar. They have lost the spiritual outlook. They are becoming constitutionally-minded.

Hitler rules millions because he was prepared to move with the times. The Mahatma is the despair of millions. He wants them and the times to move with him. "Back to civil disobedience" is out of the question now. Therefore he says, "Back to the village and the spinning wheel."

Hitler felt when he came out of prison that it would take him five years to reconstruct his Party. He admitted that his imprisonment changed Germany and demoralized and broke up his party. In the Mahatma's case, it was his release and Lord

Willington's sagacity in sending him out on an anti-untouchable propaganda that broke the Civil Disobedience party into constitutional ruts.

After a course in the jails, Hitler relied on constitutional methods* because lawless methods could not and would not be tolerated by any Government. He would no longer risk another March on Berlin.† Nothing fails like fiasco. "The political education of the masses," as James Murphy tells us, "was to be his ideal."

*"So Adolf Hitler decided to adopt a purely constitutional plan of campaign." *Adolf Hitler*: By James Murphy (P. 83.)

†The story of the March on Berlin is told by James Murphy in *Adolf Hitler* (pages 61—63.) "In the autumn of 1923, he assembled his forces on the Northern Bavarian frontier. The idea was that they would commence their march to Berlin on November 8, the vigil of the fifth anniversary of the Armistice. As a matter of fact some detachments were on the march by midnight. Hitler had not informed the Bavarian Separatists of his plans. He thought that once the march was begun, they would join him.

On the evening of November 8, there was a monster meeting in the hall of the Burgher Brewery of the Kaufinger Strasse. The audience was principally made up of the non-Hitlerite patriotic organizations. Premier Von Kahr (the Prime Minister of Bavaria) was on the platform delivering a prepared address which was a sort of official *pronunciamiento* proclaiming the Bavarian secession. Hitler had decided to turn this meeting into a rally for the national crusade."

Hitler was dramatic in his attack. His style is German just as the Mahatma's is Indian--each follows the line that appeals to its people. What the military fashion is to the German, the spiritual style is to the Indian. And so, we learn from Murphy who has taken the story from Hitler's own biography: "While Von Kahr was speaking Hitler entered accompanied by a strong body of his own troops.

The Mahatma too thought constitutionalism must have a place in the Congress, the recognition of which alone would remove the ban on its working organizations and committees.

He fired his revolver at the ceiling and ordered the men on the platform to enter an adjacent room. Among those who thus obeyed the point of Hitler's revolver were Von Kahr, the Premier, Von Lossow, the local chief of the Republican Army and Col. Von Seisser, the Chief of the Bavarian State Police. Hitler read his "Proclamation to All the Germans." The names of Ludendorff, Hitler, Von Lossow and Seisser were appended to it. Ludendorff was to be the Regent Governor of Germany, Hitler to be Chancellor, Von Lossow, Minister of War and Von Seisser, National Chief of Police."

Murphy tells us, such was the personnel of what Hitler styled the Provisional National Government. Then he proceeds to usher in dramatically the veteran Ludendorff on the scene.

"Ludendorff entered the hall as the proceedings were going on. Hitler had planned this with him, for it was thought that if Ludendorff joined the crusade the Republican Army would not stand out against its old General."

This Disobedience March (we leave out the word "Civil" but it was non-violent on the side of Hitler) reached the red climax when the Government forces met the challenge. "Within two days large detachments of Hitler's storm-battalions closed in on Munich. But the local authorities deserted the Swastika. Von Lossow had brought out his men to block Hitler's way. Von Seisser was on the job with his police. The Nazi Storm-troops marched in military fashion through the city, Ludendorff and Hitler at their head. But when they reached the Odeonsplatz the barricades were up. The army obeyed the order to fire. Seventeen of the Hitlerites were killed. Hitler himself fell on the pavement and broke a collar bone. Ludendorff stood up straight and walked with head erect in the direction of the soldiers. They opened a path for their former Commander."

Just as Gandhi's marches were snuffed out—though they had Oriental simplicity and a spiritual touch which turns the Indian mind—so was Hitler's. We read: "The march on Berlin was over. The Nazi organization was officially

Hitler preached with fervour the Nazi programme which was drawn up by one of his brainy associates to whom he gave full credit and whom he appointed as Minister of Commerce when he accepted office in 1933. There is gratitude in Hitler's politics so long as there is loyalty. Constitutionally he undermined the constitution which rests on laws which must obey him first.

"International Socialism of the Marxist type is dead in Germany." The death of an idea cannot be permanent. It gets into a new body. Or it resurges in the same old form.

For the present, at any rate, Marxian Socialism is dead in Germany. Karl Marx, by the way, was a Jew.

And so is the German Republic dead. "The failure of the German Republic is universally recognized." What is alive is the Constitution. Hitler is

disbanded. Hitler was arrested. In the following February he was brought to trial on a charge of high treason. He was condemned to five years' imprisonment in a fortress."

Both Tilak and Gandhi also got five years once—the latter was released after two years when his followers entered the Legislature to move a resolution on his release. The resolution was balloted in the name of Mr. (now Sir) Shanmukham Chetty, the Congress Party whip, (ex-President of the Assembly.) Mr. Chetty, however, was never a serious-minded Congressman. He only joined the Congress in fair weather after they had entered the Legislature. Gandhi was released a few hours before the resolution of the Congress Party was moved.

"It was while he (Hitler) was serving his sentence in the fortress of Landsberg that he wrote his autobiography, *Mein Kampf*."—*Adolf Hitler*: by James Murphy (Chapman and Hall.)

its God—its maker and unmaker, the undisputed dictator of Germany with authority to alter the constitution.*

It is the same authority to change the Congress constitution that Mahatma Gandhi aims at. Like Hitler, he does not seek immediate result. He has allowed Congressmen to go into the constitutional field. He may even exclude them from the yarn franchise. Whether he does so or not, he will certainly keep them captives. When he calls himself "a born democrat," he only reveals his belief in the strength of numbers which he is prepared to secure by even becoming a minority inside or outside the Congress for he wants discipline. He is certainly aiming at a revival of his movement if, in the meantime, Britain does not jockey him into an Agreement for which the prospects are apparently dim and distant. He is not afraid of the present lull. He has seen many such—many more than Hitler. Each lull to him is but the birth-swoon of a new movement. And age sits lightly on this wonderful man, fed on fruit and goat's milk chiefly. He has no opponents—not even the Socialist Jawaharlal Nehru who sits at his feet as even the

*It (the German Republic) came to an end in March 1933, when the members of the Reichstag, elected under the constitution of the Republic, gathered in session at the Kroll Opera House and voted by an overwhelming majority to appoint Adolf Hitler Dictator of Germany for four years, with power to alter the constitution. It was a Jew, Hugo Preuss, who actually drew up, and formulated that constitution in 1919." *Adolf Hitler* : by James Murphy, (p. 141).

Gandhi was accused of aspiring to resume power as a Dictator of Congress by the ultimatum which he gave of retirement or reviving the yarn franchise. Labour franchise was to have been the qualification for Congress membership. Every member was to supply self-spun yarn. That was the way, since abandoned, of effectively introducing discipline and weeding out or rendering impotent the constitutionalist opponents.

godless politicians with a communist outlook have to in this god-ridden land. Nor even Pundit Malaviya with his Santanist stunt—it was a comedy-tragedy that Sanatana Dharma should have been reduced to a stunt for an ephemeral election at which the Congress took temporary fright as announced by Gandhi's principal lieutenant Mr. Rajagopalachari in the *Hindu* of August 16 in which he solemnly pledged himself not to make Temple Entry Bill an election issue and not to proceed with the Bill in any legislature without a public mandate—nor even Sri Sankaracharya, an old opponent, in his pre-Sanyasi days, of Mr. Rajagopalachari—not a single man or party in the country, not even Bhai Parmanand, whole-heartedly!

British newspapers may compare the Mahatma to a broken-down tenor tormenting the ears of a queue outside the doors of the theatre where a new star is billed to appear.* Punditjee thinks he is the new political star. But there is no knowing when he will not sink again into the Congress back-waters. After the defeat of his party he may have the stamina to venture beyond into the main.

The fact is Gandhi still prays and works to conquer. He is moderate to-day because moderation is the order of the day. He floats with the tide. He has the tact of the hour. His outlook is still extreme. His goal, he says, is *Purna Swaraj* with all the implications of that expression. In no case will he accept a settlement which rules out the goal of "complete independence" in the English sense of the term, with all its preciseness and exactness, he has recently told the world. Every settlement will be a step in the direction of that goal. Probably he will

*That is how Hitler was treated when he emerged from prison, says James Murphy in *Adolf Hitler* (P. 83).

put a time-limit to it if negotiations are started with him which the Congress Parliamentarians hope to bring about by persistent political pressure.

There is a similarity between the Congress Party leader Mr. B. Desai's repeated talk of self-determination,—of course blessed by Gandhi and the Congress—and the first of the Twenty-five points of Hitler's Nazi programme :

"We claim that all Germans must be united in one Great Germany, this claim being based on the right of *national determination*."

Germany has a population of less than seventy millions, easier to organize, because of a tradition of discipline, though they too have had religious stumbling blocks to overcome, but none so formidable and irreconcilable as in India. Hitler was able to overcome the German obstacles.

The Mahatma has made repeated endeavours by uniting the opposites in a campaign against a common opponent. But the opponent proved every time more powerful, if less in number, than Hitler's Jews. The power of Britain in India is derived from the Indian people themselves. That would have been destroyed if Britain had offered a policy of negation to the non-co-operation of the Mahatma. As Gandhi openly aimed at weaning every co-operator from the Government, Britain decided to accept some of the demands of the co-operators and thus strengthen their faith. The Round Table Conference without Gandhi in the beginning, with Gandhi in the middle, investing it with a glamour—and without Gandhi again at the end was exactly what British Conservatives could have wished for.

The Mahatma is to-day in the wilderness because his undoubtedly subtle brain has not been equal to the diplomacy of Lord Willingdon at this end and the National Government at the other assisted by world-experienced diplomats and statesmen with expert knowledge of India including three such different personalities like Lord Irwin and Sir John Simon and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald.

Some critics of Gandhi say: "It is a mistake he went to England at all. Whitehall has weighed him and found....." Some others say: "It is a pity he went to Lahore and succumbed to the Nehrus," both father and son,—and the slogan of sovereign independence and severance of British connexion."

Probably Mahatma-ites think his visit to England—his loin cloth facing the blaze of publicity and the rigours of English winter—has been the biggest advertisement that the Congress could have ever had. He did not return like Amanulla. He did not sacrifice a kingdom for a top-hat or a cause for black coat and striped trousers. Amanulla's experience has been a lesson and a warning. He stuck to the loin cloth at all cost—though a barrister now foolishly debarred.

The late President Vithalbhai Patel told the late Lord Birkenhead: "Gandhi is only biding his time." He was sure to revive Civil Disobedience. And so the Mahatma did.

When Vithalbhai was withering away in Vienna, he still nursed the hope that Council entry would be revived and that he would return to the Legislature and resume the Presidential wig. The Congress Party might like to capture the Chair but Vithalbhai is dead. Even his spirit of obstruction has not survived him. There is no evidence of it. The Congress itself is more definitely attracted by some features of

the White Paper than it cares to disclose. Its own hope is to use the legislatures built upon the White Paper as a means to what they may call *Purna Swaraj*. To this the Extremists are perfectly entitled. Their immediate objective is to capture the Provincial Councils not only to use the new resources to push on the Congress work but also to bring popular and Governmental pressure to settle the future of the Federation at a Constituent Assembly composed of elected representatives from the Provincial and Central Legislatures.

And this Constituent Assembly will have a Dual Policy. While appealing to the political patriotism of the Indians and interpreting Dominion Status in the light of the Statute of Westminster* which makes it as good as *Purna Swaraj*, it will also hope to win over England by making trade concessions.

Imperial Preference was not ruled out by Mahatma Gandhi while he was in England. If he is satisfied,—

*“No law and no provision of any law made after the commencement of this Act by the Parliament of a Dominion shall be void or inoperative on the ground that it is repugnant to the Law of England, or to the provisions of any existing or future Act of Parliament of the United Kingdom, or any order, rule or regulation made under any such Act, and the powers of the Parliament of a Dominion shall include the power to report or amend any such Act, order, rule or regulation in so far as the same is part of the Law of the Dominion.

†It is hereby declared and enacted that a Parliament of a Dominion has full power to make laws having extra-territorial operation.

‡No Act of Parliament of the United Kingdom passed after the commencement of this Act shall extend, or be deemed to extend, to a Dominion, unless it is expressly declared in that Act that that Dominion has requested and consented to the enactment thereof.”—*The Statute of Westminster*.

there is such a thing as face-saving in politics—that a scheme is adumbrated which lays the foundation of equality for India in the British Commonwealth, he too will agree to a policy of abolishing the mills which he has cursed with bell, book and candle in *Hind Swaraj*; and all modern machinery, leaving no rival for Lancashire in India and himself trying to clothe the bulk of the poverty-stricken nation, which can afford no luxuries, with village hand-woven and home-spun. He will seek the aid of English experts to invent a new *charkha*.

Gandhi's own present politics is one of National Socialism like Hitler's. He is a Nationalist. At the same time he is a Socialist. He does not accept Marxian Socialism which is a negation of Nationalism. He blends both. Hence his opposition to the Communists who hate him. There is a Gandhi ring in Hitler's words uttered on May 17, 1933 :

"Our National Socialism is inspired by a principle from which our philosophy of life springs. This philosophy of life places upon us fundamental obligations towards the whole of humanity. Because of our unqualified love for and loyalty towards our own people, we respect the national rights of others. To be able to live with them in peace and friendship is the deepest wish of our hearts."*

A Constituent Assembly is of course unthinkable unless the communal differences are composed. A National Convention will have to be organized for this purpose. This Convention will have to produce

*Speech delivered by Hitler in the Reichstag on May 17, 1933. The quotation is from James Murphy who has directly translated it from the text as published in *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten* for May 1918.—*Adolf Hitler*: by James Murphy (p. 169.)

something more acceptable to all concerned than the Communal Award. And here will be work enough for Mahatmaji, Punditjee, Bhaiji and Maulvis, Maulanas and Hajeers. Unless the National Convention creates a communal settlement, India cannot get a Constituent Assembly to present her case with irresistible force.

What of the Princes whose connection is with the Crown? The Constituent Assembly will have to rule out *Purna Swaraj*—otherwise the Princes will keep out and Britain will not recognize it. The cleverer way will be to interpret *Purna Swaraj* as 'Swaraj' which is already embodied in the King's message to India* and say that 'purna' was added to 'Swaraj' in view of the Statute of Westminster for the Colonies which cannot be denied to India.

Once there is a change of heart, the future will have no difficulty either for India or for Britain. And until there is this essential change and ample evidence of it, Britain will continue to keep India.

The White Paper leaves out the question of a national army deliberately. The future of India and Britain is wrapped up in this problem.

Mahatma with his non-violence perhaps cannot talk of an army. But by burying himself in a Frontier village, which he hoped for in his last statement, can he solve the North-West Frontier problem or change the facts of history? So long as there is no universal disarmament, there will be an army in India. And so long as Hindus and Muslims are divided, the constant danger of internal disturbance will necessitate the upkeep of an army which is neither Hindu nor Muslim and certainly officered by non-Hindus.

*See *India in the Crucible*. By C. S. Ranga Iyer. (Selwyn and Blunt.) The last chapter on the Crown.

Without a Nation there can be no National Army. And there can be no nation without communal tolerance in all its completeness and cordiality.

Swaraj will be but a distant dream without an Indian National Army. An army to be national surely will have to be drawn from India as a whole and not from a few military districts or provinces and classes. An army to be national, there should be no distinction of caste or class or religion among the soldiers which will be a bar to the existence or development of an *esprit de corps*. An army to be national must enjoy the confidence of the public and implicitly accept the leadership of officers to whatever community or race or religion they may belong. Such a National Army will truly come into being if communal rancour yields place to national co-operation.

"Self-Government," said Professor Keith, "without an effective Indian Army is an impossibility, and no amount of protest and demonstration or denunciation of the Imperial Government can avail to alter that fact."

Sir Philip Chetwode, the Commander-in-Chief, stated in the Council of State, during last Simla Session, the position of India under the White Paper Scheme that the Empire was won at the point of the sword and maintained by the sword. Every constitution finally rests on force of arms. Lord Birkenhead once referred to the conquest of India "at the sharp edge of the sword." As Sir Rash Behari Ghose said much before, "If India was won by the sword, it was the Indian sword that won it." This is true. Clive did not bring a large army. He created an army out of the 'untouchables' of Madras. The Government who shed tears for the depressed classes, instead of trying to convert them into intellectuals, ought to open a military school for them. Like Hitler's German,

Gandhi's Harijan is an open air fellow who loves the broad daylight, the cold bracing breeze from the forest and the adventure of the life of a soldier.

Hitler talks pathetically of the disarming of the German people after the war. What about the disarmament of the Madrasis, the disbandment of the army which defeated Dupleix and thus brought India under the British sway instead of the French ?

The one advantage that Hitler has over Gandhi is that the Mahatma is only an Aryan Vaishya whereas Hitler is an Aryan Kshatriya. The Mahatma wants to revive the Vaishya spirit and therefore attempts to produce a nation of weavers and spinners. Whereas Hitler wants to reproduce the Germany which the war destroyed. Listen to the words born of burning sincerity which Hitler uttered in his last address to Germany and the world :

"I hope that other nations will understand Germany's resolute desire to put an end to this epoch of muddling and discover a way to a final understanding among the nations on the basis of equal rights for all."

Equality to arm the people or equal universal disarmament.

The secret of British supremacy in India lay in the disarming of a whole nation. Britain has been the conqueror, India the conquered. And the symbol of conquest is the Sword. India was disarmed when she was conquered. So was Germany largely disarmed when she was vanquished in the last war.

Though Gandhi has left out the Defence question from his Swaraj talks—non-violence and militarism ill go together—his followers who are for the rapid Indianization of the army, the elimination of the

British officers from the Indian Army and the withdrawal of the British Army which they describe as "an army of occupation," mean exactly what Hitler has been saying.

"From the political and economic points of view," says the leader of defeated Germany, "the deepest roots of this misery will be found to lie in the division of the world into conquerors and conquered and in making this an enduring basis of all.....future adjustments.

"The most injurious effect arising from this classification is the compulsory disarming of one nation against the excessive increase of armament on the part of the others."

When Indian politicians talk of the military burden it is not because of the enormous cost to the tax-payer but because the price paid is not for the maintenance of an Indian National Army but an army in which public opinion has no general confidence. Every self-governing country has confidence in its army because it is drawn from the nation as a whole and officered by the nationals themselves. The martial races, the politician further grumbles, have been segregated in a few areas and are predominantly non-Hindu. The trouble with India is the difference between Hitler and Gandhi, all the distinction between "Steel Helmets" and White Caps.

To realize the unnational character of the Indian army—which to the politician is an army of the conqueror to keep his conquest—is to understand the realities of the army problem and the deplorable fact recorded in the Simon Commission that "the Indian intellectual, as a rule, has no personal longing for an army career." Our people would spin and weave

with Gandhi and shout slogans in the streets and boycott schools and colleges rather than join the University Corps, develop muscles of iron, and aspire to belong to a race of new Kshatriyas, a warrior caste of super-human youths. India does not want spinners but soldiers, not khaddar-hawkers but well-developed, able-bodied young men with a manly instead of a clerical outlook. Instead of boycotting educational institutions and opening weaving-houses, what we should do is to see to it that to every school and college is attached an athletic club which every student should compulsorily attend.

The question of losing India does not arise so long as there is no Indian National Army. Without self-defence there can be no self-rule. And self-rule is a dream so long as Gandhi aims at producing spinners whereas Hitler produces Storm Troops and Defence Squads. Instead of preaching the boycott of the schools and colleges, let every institution have its Storm Detachments known as the University Corps. Let it be compulsory for every student to join it.

Instead of yarn franchise, let a party be formed which believes in a sort of martial franchise—the wearing of special military uniform. Instead of spinning certain quantities of yarn, let the new party undergo a physical training, a semi-military drill, from day to day, “directed,” in Hitler’s words, “purely towards propagandist and educational ends and the paralysing of the Communist terror.” What India needs is not Gandhism or Nehruism but Fascism to combat it.

“The Steel Helmets arose,” said Hitler, “from the desire to keep alive the memory of common experiences at the front during the great epoch of the War, to preserve the spirit of comradeship and to defend the German people against the danger of

a Communist revolution which had been threatening since November 1918."

The Communists are not unknown to India, though Indian culture can to some extent be trusted to withstand Communism which is un-Godly and iconoclastic. However in the autonomous era of the future, the real trouble is going to come from the Have-nots who would like to oust the Haves.

The Mahatma or a future *chela* of his might like to preach the Gospel of Charkha as a great leveller. What we want, however, is not a leveller but an elevator.

The best way to lose India for Communism is for the Haves to continue their present ostrich-like existence with their heads in the sand thinking that all is well.

The strength that Communism draws is from the foreign character of the present rule. Antipathy to foreign rule is natural to every patriot. Once the hatred is there, it is easy to work on it. Therefore the less there is of foreign rule, the better the prospects for those who aspire to organize the forces of constitutionalism and democracy against Communist terror.

Mr. Winston Churchill and others who obstruct the grant of Responsible Government to India hope to retain this country with the mailed fist which in the Indian patriot's point of view, when it happens to be foreign, is worse than indigenous Communism. The foreign mailed fist will only produce a virile anti-British Nation. There will be no friend of England in India if the Churchill-Rothermere policy is followed except the hirelings of the press and the mercenaries of the platform when Communist terrorism and Charkhaism will unite and pour forth a flood of

lava. However conflicting those elements, they have a capacity to unite against "the foreigner." And so long as the foreign character of the present rule persists, the opposition to it will only increase. The less the meddlesomeness of a foreign Government, the more the appreciation of the foreigners. The British people do not like the expression "foreigners" but undoubtedly that is how their opponents look upon them and it is the latter's point of view that has to be put and met. The less the interference with the domestic concerns of the people, the less the cause for unpleasantness and friction.

In the Provinces, interference can be reduced to a minimum. At the Centre it remains to be seen to what extent Federation will carry actual responsibility.

"Decentralisation and liberty have done wonders," said General Botha. The diehards want to deny liberty by the concentration of all power in a highly centralized bureaucracy which is the surest way for the dissolution of the Empire in India.

Meantime Gandhi is trying to remove the blight that has come over the Congress—though it will take another five years—and organize non-violence, for organized Gandhism will be a thousand times more powerful than unorganized Malaviyaism, Chattarism or Parmanandism by whatever name you call everything that is actually in principle or policy or tactics or faith opposed to the Mahatma and the Congress.

If Mr. Churchill and the diehards have their way, India will reassume her manhood and fight Britain with all weapons political, economic and strategic. With Mr. Churchill and the diehards unresisted and unbeaten, in India—whatever remains of the

prestige of Britain though a good deal is lost—will crumble into nothingness.

The diehards may ridicule "snivelling hypocrisies about autonomy and freedom" but what do they suggest in their place but Military Terror? For no one in India will accept the scheme of the diehards which is to perpetuate British DOMINATION—more correctly DAMNATION—for a people who do not command respect can keep the country for a while as an armed camp but only for a fleeting while. Even India can be goaded into a revolution. Mr. Churchill and the *Daily Mail* gang know it. If they are attacking the new reforms, it is not to have them withdrawn but crushed out. They are not fair nor honest nor scrupulous.

The best way to lose India is to listen to the diehards and act as they say by hauling down the White Flag and tearing up the White Paper and uniting the potential Hitlers and Nehru Storm Troops and Steel Hemlets with White Caps and Red Shirts. Had only Gandhi transferred the army of agitators to England and combatted the diehard propagandists who misrepresent Indian capacity, character and worth, he would have grasped the nettle and incorporated in the new Government of India Act the spirit of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. As it is he preferred to follow the Communist ghosts of the Congress into the dark and dreary alley of independence, instead of using his rare gifts, high integrity and unselfish patriotism to build upon the foundation of a settlement which he had nearly reached.

Mr. Churchill's campaign against Sir Samuel Hoare is as pathetic as the Mahatma's surrender to Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru is pathetic. To describe the

White Paper as surrender to India is bathos. To renounce Gandhi-Irwin Pact which fell short of the mirage of *Purna Swaraj* may be worthy of an idealistic politician of the Congress but it is too pathetic for words.

CHAPTER XXVIII

INDOPHOBES AT BRISTOL ANSWERED.

"In the federal plan to which your Highness has so sympathetically alluded in terms of approbation for which I thank you, I believe with your Highness that the ideal solution has been found for meeting the needs and aspirations of a united India—British and Indian—in which the Indian States must have an important part to play, weighty contribution to make, and I welcome your Highness's considered utterance in its favour."—H. E. LORD WILLINGDON'S speech at State Banquet, Mandi, on October 6, 1934.

The all-Britain Conservative Conference at Bristol on October 4 was a triumph for Mr. Winston Churchill who was, like the prominent front-benchers of the Government, leaving it to the younger men to have their say. Youth commands the future but the diehards have demonstrated their strength and aspiration to control the destiny of India.

The diehards secured 520 votes at the Conservative Conference this year as against 543 which is all that the Government supporters could muster. The diehards have undoubtedly increased their popularity. This British attitude towards India is becoming definitely unfriendly.

As I have said repeatedly in the Assembly, Englishmen hate Indians even as Indians hate Englishmen. Hate begets hate. The Conservative Conference only revealed the reality of that hatred at the other

side even as the Congress resolutions exhibit the same on this side of the ocean.

At the Conservative Conference of 1933 by 737 votes to 344 (122 remaining neutral) the Government resolution was carried amidst applause. Now not only the neutrals have been wiped out but some of the supporters of the White Paper scheme have gone diehard.

In 1933, as in 1934, the Government had not challenged a direct vote on the White Paper. All that the Government wanted at the Conservative Conference of 1933 was the passing of a dilatory motion suspending judgment till the publication of the Joint Select Committee Report. That report was not available to the delegates last year, because the machinery of Whitehall like that of all Governments works more slowly than would suit their opponents. So a spirit of intolerance found expression in the following resolution at the Bristol Conference which had the support of 49 per cent. of the delegates :

"This Conference, which is prepared to support measures for a greater measure of self-government in the Indian Provinces step by step in accordance with the Government of India Act, records its emphatic opinion that the partnership between Britain and India in the Central Government of the Indian Empire must not be dissolved and urges the Government not to give its assent to proposals which imperil the future of India within the Empire or impair the confidences and unity of the Conservative Party in view of the menace of Socialism."

Diehard folly can go no further. Sir Henry Page-Croft who moved the resolution is the right-hand

man of Mr. Winston Churchill. He spoke with the same lack of sympathy for Indian aspirations which Mr. Churchill has fully exhibited. Sir Henry Page-Croft gave vent to the contempt of the diehards for India's determination to come into her own when he ruled out responsibility at the Centre treating the Montagu pledge as a scrap of paper. When Britain's life was in danger and India helped her out of the "rim of catastrophe" as Mr. Lloyd George calls it* during the last war, India did not think that the British Imperialist—the greater the diehard the greater the Imperialist—would have been guilty of the meanness which Sir Henry Page-Croft's resolution at the Bristol Conference so ungratefully and shamelessly showed. "The partnership between Britain and India at the Central Government" will, it would appear, be dissolved by the grant of the White Paper Scheme! The non-recognition of the right to partnership or the playing with that privilege will only kill all enthusiasm for that partnership and produce a multitude of de Valeras in this distant, dismal and dangerous land.

The Tory Conference was not concerned with Dominion Status. Sir Samuel Hoare who is himself a Conservative of Conservatives, an Imperialist of Imperialists, has seen to it, that not only the phrase Dominion Status does not occur in the White Paper Scheme but that the Governor-General of India is made exactly the opposite of the Colonial Governor-Generals who are constitutional whereas our Governor-General will be the uncontrolled monarch of the constitution which he can override whenever it is his whim to do so.

What more could a diehard want if his object

**War Memoirs.* Vol. III. By Mr. Lloyd George (Nicholson Ivor and Watson.)

is to keep power at the Centre in British hands and thus preserve and not destroy the British Empire? For, without India, there can be no Empire. India is not only the precious jewel in the Crown; she is also the solid foundation on which the Empire rests. She also makes the bulk of the superstructure.

The White Paper scheme, riddled with safeguards which Indian opinion positively detests, ought to have satisfied every honest Imperialist in England. Those who voted for the Page-Croft resolution are probably honest in their own way. They want to revive what Right Honourable Sir Herbert Samuel has truly described as the policy of "brute force"* of which the Punjab had a taste in the dreadful days of Sir Michael O'Dwyer.

Brute force is a boomerang as bureaucrats of the O'Dwyerian variety were made to know by an awakened public opinion which the rankest repression could not destroy. Imperialist megalomania which found expression at Bristol, when carried to its logical conclusion, would only lead in the repetition of the O'Dwyerian madness dragging British reputation in India to the zero point.

Madness was answered with madness. The unprecedented strength of public resistance which we found in India lately was a result of O'Dwyerism in

*LONDON, Oct. 6.—Sir Herbert Samuel speaking at Dundee profoundly regretted the demonstrations at Bristol yesterday, because India was not a party matter. He declared, it concerns the whole country and also the Dominions and the latter will not consent to be parties to an Empire which is merely based on brute force. The Liberal Party actively cooperated with the Government in fashioning the new Indian Constitution and if the Government stands to its proposals the Liberals all over the country will give it their continuous support.—*Reuter*.

excelsis. If a handful of diehards in London assisted by some of the discredited ex-satrap with an ignominious record can set back the clock, they are welcome to do so, for nothing would please the Indian revolutionaries more.

The Congress comment upon the diehard exhibition at Bristol is simple. The Delhi daily of Dr. M. A. Ansari, the leader of the Congress Parliamentary group, frankly stated the position of the Congress moderates who were seeking election to the Legislature and taking the Oath of Allegiance to His Majesty the King-Emperor, his heirs and successors, and who therefore could not be described as disloyal, as those who were opposed to council entry. So far as the Congress was concerned, it did not matter whether the White Paper was kept intact or whittled down beyond recognition. It did not make any difference, Dr. Ansari's organ wrote, whether one got the whole shadow or a distorted part of it. The White Paper represented only the shadow of responsibility, and was bereft of all substance. This paper held only one class in India might betray some disappointment—the Liberals. But they could be depended upon to accept what was granted, while mildly protesting for more.

This paper saw no reason, therefore, why Mr. Baldwin should be taking so much trouble to play the martyr for the White Paper proposals. He was, in the Congress opinion, only performing a thankless job. Even if he could save the White Paper from the attacks of his diehard friends, the proposals were sure to be torpedoed by the Congress,—by a most relentless campaign which it was bound to start against them.

This paper went on to say that the Congress was

convinced that the White Paper was designed not to liberate but to further fetter India, and the sooner it was cast overboard the better for all concerned. "The view of the Congress is shared by a majority of those Indians who are capable of forming an independent opinion on political subjects. They look upon the whole show and sickening process of constitution-making inaugurated with the first Round Table Conference, as an elaborate humbug and an expensive fraud."

The same authority expressed the general policy of the Congress thus :

"If India is determined to wreck the new scheme, it is not because it is too liberal, but because it is outrageously reactionary and utterly hollow*."

It is no exaggeration to say that the Bristol Conference has strengthened and encouraged the reckless fanatics who want to put an end to British rule, British connexion and everything that is British in India. The Page-Croft resolution shows how India can be successfully lost. Sir Henry Page-Croft said that he would lose a few ministers but not India. By losing the pro-Indian Ministers, he would only destroy the last vestige of pro-British feeling in India.

That fanaticism in England should have risen with the fall of the Gandhi movement is natural. Politics are like the waves of the sea. When there is a hollow in India, there is a swell in England. The inevitable failure of the Gandhi movement, because it was predated, has resulted in the natural outbreak of diehard ferocity. This does not affect the enemies of Britain in India who having defied laws and disobeyed their

* *The National Call*, Delhi, dated October 6, 1934.

best are prepared for the very worst. But it rouses the hostility of the moderates and radicals who honestly believe in Dominion Status and British connexion.

If these Constitutionalists are destroyed and discredited, then our Republicans will be the only Party in the country who could lay claim to popular support. The Page-Croft movement aims at the extirpation of constitutionalism in India and common sense in England.

India will not accept a truncated White Paper with no Federal responsibility at the Centre. Thanks to the courageous statesmanship of Lord Willingdon *by rising equal to the occasion, His Excellency has sent a new message of reassurance pulsating through the country in his clear and unequivocal reaffirmation of the Government's position in regard to the Federal plans. The Viceroy's words quoted at the top of this chapter is a timely reminder to the diehards that the boats are burnt, the Rubicon is crossed and there is no turning back.

CHAPTER XXIX

AFTER BRISTOL.

Like the caterpillar that takes the thread from its own mouth, and builds its cocoon, and at last finds itself caught inside the cocoon, we have bound ourselves by our own actions, we have thrown the network of our actions around ourselves.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

British diehards set the wheel of Imperialism in motion at Bristol. Indian extremism, at its Conference in Bombay, replied that its domain of freedom lay outside the boundaries of the British Empire.

The Conservatives who went diehard at Bristol hoped to crush India under the Imperialist wheel. That hope is being fed falsely and foully.*

*We find from the London letter (by air mail) of the *Statesman* of Friday, October 24, 1934, that after Bristol, some significant speeches have been made.

Sir Henry Page-Croft has followed up his Bristol victory by wild declarations on the folly of the Reforms. He describes the Bristol triumph as "only the first blow." He announces: "We shall not rest until we have succeeded in causing the whole of the country to look into this question and to realize the immensity of the folly of the Reforms."

Sir Oswald Mosley who deplored the lack of parliamentary ferocity even in the boisterous days of Swarajism, when addressing a tea-party of the Central Legislators, has now, in Fascist fashion, begun to deplore the lack of firmness in the White Paper policy of governing India. He declared, following the triumph at Bristol: "We have a right to be in India and we intend to stay there. We have more than a right; we have a duty to stay there." Sir Oswald has enunciated a four-point programme accord-

Our Socialists denounce the Moderates as traitors because they believe in an Empire which came out in its true colours in the Imperialist outcry at Bristol.

India, they say, must no longer put its faith in Britain. There is no difference, they urge, between Page-Crofts and Baldwins. Both are tarred with the same brush of Imperialism. Only the latter are more cunning as that most astute Viceroy Lord Irwin in whose net even the Mahatma was caught! Therefore, to the Socialists, it was a good thing that the Mahatma contemplated retirement.

They even suspect the Congress which they condemn as a capitalist tool. The swaraj which they stand for is the emancipation of the masses, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat which they feel is the truest democracy.

A more untimely and senseless thing than the diehard outburst at Bristol is unthinkable. Page-Croft and other pinch-beck Empire builders do not care what happens to the supporters of British connexion in India. They want to keep India in bondage. They believe in bearing the White Man's Burden. England which defeated Germany can dominate India. But they forget how England was helped by India to

ing to which (a) Indian tariffs should be removed from Lancashire goods. (b) Japanese textiles should be excluded from India. (c) A policy of better housing condition for their workers should be enforced against the Bombay mill-owners. Sir Oswald is also for coercion and force.

His Majesty's Government has spoken through its Tory Home Secretary, Sir John Gilmour, that "they were not going to ask the people to provide forces to dragoon the great Empire of India."

They still hope to drug it with Reforms !

defeat Germany. Lord Birkenhead (then Sir F. E. Smith) has borne testimony to the "opportuneness"* of India's aid which Lord Lloyd and his ilk who foolishly feel like brooding like Englishmen on "Trafalgar eve," will do well to remember for England's more than India's own sake, for India has begun to feel that she is the architect of her future.

The fact that British party politics are so personal and Western politicians are so selfish explains how when once out of office, some of them display and are applauded for displaying irresponsibility.

In India, owing to the opposition of all parties to the British rule and their desire to replace it by Indian rule, the selfishness of the party politicians has not yet begun to exercise the same sway. It

*Lord Birkenhead wrote: "He who wishes to form an opinion upon the opportuneness of the Indian contribution should reflect how swiftly the first arrivals were rushed into the firing line."—*Indian Corps in France*.

Lord Birkenhead wrote how the hesitation in regard to plunging Canadian units into the front did not prevail in the case of the Indian corps: "No man could be bold enough to predict the result of plunging Oriental troops into those horrible scenes in a pitiless climate, to loose life and limb in a quarrel remote from their own experiences, uninspired by fears on behalf of their own people, or even of their own property. It was thought necessary to give six months' training in England to the superb raw material which formed the first Canadian Division; and many months were allowed to pass before it seemed desirable to send a Territorial Division as a unit to France. And yet those who knew the Indian soldier best were confident however sudden his immersion into the Great War might be, that his tradition, his loyalty and his sense of duty would carry him through. And they did."—*Ibid*.

Lord Lloyd says that the political situation in India reminds him of the eve of Trafalgar. His lordship is more than a century behind!

must be admitted our own leaders have a tendency to play the petty tyrant of the medieval type.

A subject section can have no party politics until subjection yields place to freedom. This is the feeling of our leading politicians and parties.

No doubt pique, pettiness and tyranny, all these evils are common to politics all the world over. The evils in India, however unbearable to the unhappy victims, are very much less than they actually are in the West.

The unbalanced speeches and the reckless votings at Bristol are a result of British party politics.

Our own Extremists while laughing at the White Paper either because it does not go far enough or because it is a mill-stone round our neck too difficult to shake off and therefore to attain independence, have not pondered over the atmosphere of misgivings created by the fact that the Conservatives had largely become diehard at Bristol.

It may be the diehards may be defeated by the reassertion of sensible leadership. Mr. Baldwin has made it fairly clear that he is going to lead so long as he is the leader. But that the White Paper will be modified, that the Federation will be delayed, that central responsibility will be reduced to a mockery,—all these to placate the rebels within the Conservative fold—are some of the conclusions which Indians have drawn from Bristol. Despondency has invaded the moderate minds, where hope once glimmered.

In that mood of despondency, our Socialists have declared that Independence should be clearly defined as lying outside the British Empire*. Thus a nail has

*The All-India Congress Socialist Party Conference passed a resolution on October 22, at Bombay, plainly declaring that Independence meant freedom outside the British Empire.

been driven into the coffin of Gandhi-Irwin pact.

The Mahatma himself has probably begun to suspect that there is very little hope of rescuing the Pact from the depths. Hence his leaving politics to the Congress and the vociferous extremists—and starting all over again his own mission in India*.

It was, as stated in a previous chapter, during Lord Willingdon's Governorship of Bombay that the Mahatma started travelling third-class studying the Indian problem. During the Willingdon Viceroyalty the Mahatma has felt obliged to retire from politics, travel among the villagers preferably on foot and teach them to stick to their old tastes, ideas and ideals and refuse to move with the times.

Educated men who will oppose the Mahatma have no use for him. India lives in the villages. The Mahatma wants to build upon his ideas of *Hind Swaraj* which is really what appeals to the rural mind. He wants to offer battle to Western science, machinery, education; to everything modern; and after waging that successful war and rousing the old-world ideas of our villagers uninfluenced by modern education, he may build upon them his political programme of action.

There is a difference, however, between the Mahatma of twenty years ago and now. The pulse grows sluggish in twenty years. The Mahatma is physically weaker. He is an old man. But his faith is bright and fire unquenchable. His desire to serve

*Probably the Mahatma's quiet moderation will shine in contrast to the verbal extremism of the noisy Nationalists and Socialists. But if he returns to the Congress and repeats his programme of suffering, the windbags will retire and men of action replace them.

the public is therefore all the greater. But he is very disheartened*.

There is no such thing as Gandhiji's retirement from politics. So long as he is doing something, the national life will centre there. If he leaves the Congress and leaves politics—the extent of both of which remains to be seen—he will give to the Nation what is meant for the Nation instead of giving it to a great national organization.

None can question the power of the Congress. Its hold on the Hindus is real and effective. Unless there is a big split in the Congress, it will continue to be the largest political organization in India.

Having said all this, it must at once be admitted by Congressmen themselves that the Congress is only a party having the same hold on India as the Conservative Party or the National Government in England for the last four years.

*The position in the country today has demoralized the Congress and disheartened the Mahatma who has given utterance to such depressing thoughts:—

“The position at present is that I am absolutely helpless.”

“My mind does not work. I am not so foolish a general as to continue at the head of a force when I feel that no good can come of it.”

“I have lost the power to persuade you to my view. I have become helpless. It is no use keeping a man like me at the helm of affairs, a man who has lost his strength.”

Nothing new nor strange has happened either to the Congress or the people. What was must come again. During the first non-co-operation movement, victory seemed near and enthusiasm for suffering was staggering. Mr. C. R. Das who was then in jail, in his undelivered Presidential Address at the Ahmedabad Congress (1921) which was subsequently published in Gandhi's *Young India* described the situation thus:—

“We break in order to build, we destroy in order to

As a Congress leader, the Mahatma's greatness and power were directly given to the building up of the Congress party. Therefore up to now it is neither incorrect nor unfair to state that he gave to the Congress what was meant for India. No doubt through the Congress he has awakened India.

construct; we reject in order to accept. This is the whole history of human endeavour. If subjection be an evil then we are bound to non-cooperate with every agency that seeks to perpetuate our subjection. That is a negation; but it affirms our determination to be free to win our liberty at any cost. Nor do I agree that the doctrine is one of despair. It is a doctrine of hope and of confidence and of unbounded faith in its efficacy. One has only to look at the faces of the sufferers as they are led to prison to realise that victory is already ours."

Referring to the spirit of the students, "the hope and glory of the Motherland," Mr. Das said:—

"I, who have been privileged to watch the current of political life in its very centre, can testify to the wonderful courage and unflinching devotion displayed by the students. Theirs is the inspiration behind the movement, theirs the victory. They are the torch-bearers of the time; they are the pilgrims on the road. If suffering has been their lot, victory is their due." Disillusioned by the sloppiness of the national schools, tired of the Congress leaders, after withdrawing from the movement, the students returned to their Government and aided schools.

In 1922, at the Gaya Congress, a year afterwards, the situation had changed but the Congress would not listen to the change of plans which Mr. Das advocated. In his Presidential Address at the Gaya Congress, Mr. Das said:—

"The outward appearance of the people to-day is somewhat deceptive. They appear to be in a tired condition and a sense of fatigue has partially overcome them. But beneath all this exterior of quietude, the pulse of the nation beats as strongly as before and as hopefully as at the beginning of this movement. We have to consolidate the strength of the nation. We have to devise a plan of work which will stimulate their energy so that we can accelerate our journey towards Swaraj. I shall place before you one by one the items of work which, in my opinion, the Indian National Congress should prescribe for the nation."

He has been feeling like going out of the Congress into the free India of the villages. Congressmen would not leave him. They will follow him into the villages. Their Provincial Government will adopt his programme. Incidentally, even foreign industrialists and foreign millowners, whether of Java or Japan, must feel grateful to the Mahatma for giving his attention to the reviving of the cottage industries which are not their rivals.

The Mahatma, however, is too patriotic to ride his fad to death. He will say, by way of compromise, "prefer the rural hand-made products to the mill-made ones. Prefer the Indian-mill things to non-Indian ones."

So long as the emphasis is against mills, the enthusiasm for the indigenous mill-owners is sure to wane. To that extent, the Mahatma is true to his teachings in *Hind Swaraj*. But he wants to save the Congress from his experiment, at any rate for the present, until his villages capture it or create a more powerful, less wordy and more practical rival or the educated agitator is captured by the neo-Socialistic idea of the Mahatma.*

The Mahatma is a strange combination of all that is practical and dreamy. He is a practical philosopher. The philosophy which he practises is taken from the actual life of the people. His reply to Britain after the performance of the diehards at Bristol—which he has not even condescended to notice—is to take India to the pre-British period, the pre-mechanical era, the pre-chemical and industrial age.

Probably when and if the Congress captures the provincial administrative machinery, its leaders will

*The Mahatma considers himself a Socialist in a new sense. He is all for the masses but he is not Marxian.

partially put into practice the Mahatma's ideas, developing a scheme midway between manual labour and machines, when the villages will hum with rural factories avoiding the horrors of the big mills and the urban hells in which the labourers live.

How far the Socialists will agree with the Mahatma remains to be seen. With our mills pulled down, there can be no capitalist. When there is no capitalist, there can be no Socialist either. Capitalism and Socialism are like cause and effect.

The effect on the non-official European in India of the Bristol Conference is not clearly discernible except that there is a tendency in certain quarters subtly to disparage the Federation or riddle it with new difficulties.

One of the enterprising European dailies of Calcutta-Delhi followed the diehard declaration at Bristol against Federation and central responsibility with the publication of certain parts from memoranda prepared by eminent counsel in London for the late Jam Sahib when he was the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes.

In this connection, it is useful to recall how the diehard press had exploited the ruling of the Viceroy who presided over the Princes' Chamber when the Jam Sahib was, by an error, reading from a wrong text, irrelevant for the particular occasion,—which that great sportsman recognized later. A great statesman like Lord Willingdon would be the last man to gag an old friend like the Jam Sahib and the authorized spokesman of the Princes.

It is significant, however, that in certain circles an attempt should be made—after the outburst of the

diehards at Bristol though not in response to them—to make Central responsibility more remote than ever and Federation as fantastic as possible.* Probably a United States of Europe is more easy, in Anglo-Indian conception, than a Pan-Indian Federation—a view which, no doubt, the British diehards will endorse.

Be that as it may, the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, while saying farewell to Sir James Fitzpatrick, the Agent to Governor-General for the Punjab States, made certain observations on the

*The *Statesman* in an editorial in its issue of October 22 summarizes with approval views of the Jam Sahib's counsel thus:—

“Counsel takes the view that for safety not less than 80 to 85 per cent. of the States (measured in accordance with an approved scale) should join the Federation at once and that 89 to 95 per cent. should have joined by the end of its first five years of existence; they suggest that the Princes should make the former a condition of their consenting to federate and the latter a condition of their remaining in the Federation after five years have elapsed. They also suggest that if, after a prolonged period of trial, “the great majority of federated States conclude that Federation is working badly or is a failure so far as it affects the States they should then be free to bring it to an end altogether.” In such a case the pre-Federation position would be reverted to and British India be left to draw up its own constitution with the possibility of some means of common action between it and the States being devised at a later date.”

In the same editorial from which we have quoted above the *Statesman* writes significantly enough:

“When Briand was advocating his United States of Europe scheme, it was easy for him to demonstrate its advantage to each separate European State; but this unhappily brought it no nearer to realization. Counsel's advice to the Princes to hold together to federate is unquestionably sound advice; present indications do not encourage the hope that it will, therefore, be followed whole-heartedly.”

position of the Princes in regard to the Federation as late as October 24, 1934. His Highness the Maharaja of Patiala who read from a manuscript and therefore whose speech cannot be dismissed as post-prandial, spoke about the association in a Pan-Indian Federation of British India and the Indian States, as follows :—

“That the close co-operation of the States and the association of their Governments under certain essential safeguards, which we have laid down, are necessary for the evolution of such a Constitution, has been accepted by all the parties concerned, His Majesty's Government, the Rulers of the States and the people of British India.

“The nature and extent of that association is now being defined by the Joint Parliamentary Committee, and till their Report is published and has been studied with care, it would not be right for me to express any definite opinion. But this much I should like to say. It has never been my intention, and I think I can say with some confidence, it has not been the intention of the great majority of Princes to withdraw from, or modify the position which they have adopted all along on the question of Federation.

“That position has been that they are prepared to enter a Federal Constitution if the guarantees for their internal sovereignty which they consider essential for safeguarding their future are provided, and if in the Government of the Federation they are given authority and influence proportionate to their political and historical importance. Whether the proposals as they finally emerge from the Joint Parliamentary Committee will satisfy these conditions,

is a matter on which it is not possible to prophesy. For myself I assure you that I shall keep an open sympathetic mind, and study with care the proposals when they are officially placed before me for my consideration."

What new difficulties lie athwart the path of Pan-Indian Federation, the future alone knows. Whether or not, they can be overcome is too early to speculate. The attitude of a coterie of extreme politicians in British India that the condition precedent to the establishment of a Federation is the introduction of Responsible Government in the Indian States as in British India, ought to encourage the diehards who are opposed to a Federation.

Will the Federation be scrapped? As it emerged from the big talk of the Princes at the first Round Table Conference, and as no other scheme can bring two Indias under one umbrella, all Idealists and Nationalists ought to welcome the early establishment of a Federation instead of dwelling dreamily on condition-precedents. Like the diehards at Bristol, the European non-officials in India have ceased to be enthusiastic about a Federation, though they used to enthuse over it once. The *Statesman*, which is their spokesman, recently recorded its considered view :—

"To venture into an all-India Federation is dangerous and may be disastrous since the contrast between the absolutism of most of Indian India and the growing power of representative institutions in British India will be made the more obvious and therefore be resented the more as the two come into greater administrative contact. It is not, therefore, surprising that the Princes should waver and change their minds, should disagree amongst

themselves and be suspicious of one another's and of the Government of India's intentions."*

A section of the Anglo-Indian (old style) class does not like Paramountcy's enthusiasm for the Federation infecting the Princes. It forgets that the enthusiasm at the First Round Table Conference of every Prince for a Pan-Indian Federation was wholly spontaneous and definitely forced the hands of Britain. Constitution-making is not hide and seek. Had the Princes and their expensive advisers not waxed eloquent on Federation, probably British Indian Home Rule would have been proceeded with leaving Indian India in the placid pathetic contentment of its inhabitants.

Sir James Fitzpatrick appears to think that their placid life in the Indian States not burdened with democracy and its concomitant aspirations and the inevitable discontent and distemper arising from their non-fulfilment is far better than that of the people in British India. "I have always thought," observed the Agent to Governor-General for the Punjab States in his reply to Patiala, "that the lot of the subjects of a well-run Indian State is preferable to that of their brothers in British India.

"What the subjects ask for is good government, sympathy and security and where they get these and have in addition the personal devotion to their Ruler which still exists in the hearts of a people who believe in the Divine Right of Kings, they are happy and contented."

Had Sir James the opportunity of advising Eve, he would have seen to it that she did not eat the fruit

*The *Statesman* of October 22, 1934.

of knowledge. Knowledge is the enemy of contentment. Who could be more happy than our first ancestors before they tasted the forbidden fruit?

It may be noted that the Agent to Governor-General for the Punjab States is not unprepared to advise the Princes to come into the Federation provided Paramountcy is prepared to pay the price.

He said: "The picture will shortly be completed and the Order will be called on to decide one way or the other."

Is it possible for the Princes to keep out of the Federation? In the opinion of the *Statesman*, notwithstanding the disasters and dangers of a Federation, "unquestionably," "the less hazardous course for the Princes" will be to take "the one recommended by counsel to the Jam Sahib—as far as possible unanimous Federation with the closest co-operation afterwards whether in staying in the Federation and working it or in pronouncing it a failure and leaving it."

Unanimous Federation is out of the question because the Indian States do not constitute that dream-land in which uniformity or unity or unanimity prevails. The States have individualities of their own. Also their peculiar idiosyncracies. "Apes are apes though dressed in scarlet." It is not the apish uniformity that we should aspire to create but preserve that unity in variety which is India's beauty.

Variety does not mean maintaining an attitude of quarrelsomeness. In the words of Sir James Fitzpatrick:

"If only the Princes can sink their differences and jealousies and work in whole-hearted co-operation for the good of their Order and subjects and of British India, Federation need have no terrors."

Meantime we have not heard the last of the safeguards. When one looks at the White Paper, one sees only safeguards in it. When the Government of India Bill is drafted and the federal picture is completed, safeguards will increase. Sir James Fitzpatrick said : "The Indian States are justified in requiring reasonable safeguards and Government would be the last to desire to see an Order, which has always been loyal and devoted to the Crown, weakened or imperilled."

The diehards at Bristol thought that Federation would jeopardize the position of the Princes. The *Statesman* thinks that the federal plan has added to the awkwardness of the Princes. It wrote in its issue of October 22 :—

"It has to be admitted that the Princes are in an awkward situation. Their whole position in India is essentially artificial; they stand between paramountcy, which, if it has saved them from suffering the consequences of all but the most flagrant misgovernment, has also been a constant source of irritation, even on occasion of humiliation, and the gathering force of Indian nationalism, with its by-products, which include such developments as demagoguery, trade unionism in some of its manifestations, all manner of expressions of economic and political discontent that are to an absolute ruler what dictatorship is to a parliamentarian, something undermining the very structure of his life. To cling now to paramountcy is feeble, and may be futile, since treaties notwithstanding no British Government is likely to tolerate, through the vacillation of the Princes, an indefinite postponement in the application of the only plan for Indian constitutional reform at present in existence."

Even counsel to the late Jam Sahib could not

advise opposition to Federation. As summarised by the *Statesman* the general sense of these memoranda is that partly as a result of the Princes' initial enthusiasm the British Government is publicly committed to the federal idea and cannot now retract; that the Princes have everything to lose by backing out now and everything to gain by coming into an All-India Federation, provided only that they come in sufficient numbers and hold together when they are in.

The problem before the Princes is to decide to what extent they can unite among themselves and in what strength they can enter the Federation. Counsel for Jam Sahib while approving of Federation and even acknowledging that it is "in the highest interests of the States," would suggest a safeguard against an insufficient number federating. Why eminent counsel took this cautious view is disclosed in the fact that being in a minority in a Federation, the Princes' representatives could be "thrown into contrast with the interests of British India : the more so as Indian India will be, as it were, the minor partner and in a sense on the defensive." The conflict will be between the Republican forces in British India which will encourage the Democratic forces in the Indian States and the votaries of a benevolent autocracy. Counsel's words, "the never-ceasing conflict between the advance of democracy and Indian kingship" ought to be sufficient inducement for the Princes to join the Federation. They can not only ally themselves with the Conservatives in British India but also gradually prepare their people for responsible Government. Constitutional monarchy, the glory of Britain's constitution, can be evolved in the Indian States in order to avoid the enforcing of a democratic system through extremist agitation in British India and propaganda in Indian States. This evolution is difficult and must necessarily be slow as on it depends the

decrease of the supervision of Paramountcy which will be reluctant to part with power. Sir Harcourt Butler has already expressed Paramountcy's opinion on the subject in his Princes' Enquiry Report in his inimitable words pregnant with meaning: "Paramountcy must be paramount." The Princes would insist—and very rightly—that their integrity must remain inviolate and therefore British India should neither be an arena of agitation against Indian States nor the Federation used as an engine for that purpose. The beauty of the Federation itself lies in its very complication. The scheme will serve its purpose if the Federation keeps the balance of power and obtains that freedom and security which are non-existent without equality of restraint on the part of the principal participants, visible and invisible.

The opponents of Central Responsibility who let themselves go at Bristol will be satisfied by the fact that Federation will not be a long jump into the unknown. Sceptics doubt whether the Princes will hold together if they enter the Federation. What are their common interests after all? Apart from the basic common interest of kingship, the *Statesman* fears that "they have other interests which divide them one from another, at least as much as *qua* princes, they are divided from British India. Some of them are Moslems and some Hindus; some have large States and some small; some are enlightened and some reactionary; some of their own free will have encouraged the development of representative institutions and some have set their faces against any limitation on their absolute authority; some have even coquetted with Congress and some treated it as the abomination of desolation; and so on. Is it to be supposed that a common basic interest will transcend all these minor differences?"

Surely there is no case for a Federation, if the Indian and British Indias will not some day become united not only by common interests but also by common aspirations. From the British point of view, the apprehension quoted above is not extravagant. That Princes are divided among themselves, that all of them are not reactionary, is the hope of and the justification for the Federation.

Coming into the Federation means moving out of the backwaters in which some of the Indian States will like to be for all time. The larger ones at any rate will have to move with the times. While Federation will oppose the revolutionary attempts to discredit and overthrow the Princes from their position of absolutism, its influence will imperceptibly be exercised in making the administration in the Indian States more responsive—if not immediately responsible in the Parliamentary sense. Responsive Government is the threshold of Responsible Government. The necessity for a Federation arises from the fact that Central Responsibility must be maintained and not allowed to break down. Opposition from the diehards to Federation is justified as they oppose Central Responsibility. To justify is one thing and to be just is quite another. Britain will be guilty of breaking a pledge which she gave India, with the assent of all parties and Parliament through the late Edwin Montagu—a pledge which was written with the late Lord Curzon's own hand as a member of the Cabinet—if she denies Central Responsibility. It is open to her to scrap Federation and set up Responsible Government in British India only. But the result will be the States would be so many little Ulsters without the advantage of a united Ulster. And British India will claim at a future date that the responsibility of the Government of India ought to be exercised over the Princes also, because the Government of

British India will sympathise with the boisterous awakening of the State subjects. An idea of leaving the Princes out of the federal picture can be gathered from the tendency of the Congress to extend its tentacles into the Indian States in spite of the opposition of Mahatma Gandhi. Whatever a handful of diehards may say to the contrary, it can be safely assumed that the die is cast and Federation or Central Responsibility which may be foolishly delayed can never be wisely or bravely or honestly denied.

The Congress-minded people in India will not be sorry if the Federation is scrapped. The White Paper Federal Assembly, they say, will be worse than the present Assembly. Babu Rajendra Prasad, the President of the 48th session of the Indian National Congress, which was held in Bombay on October 26, 1934, directed his attack on the Federation in a speech, editorially applauded as "able" by the *Statesman* the next day. This "able" speech of one of the moderates—so far as words go—among the Congress leaders, disapproved the Federation as having no parallel in history especially the provision for the counteracting of the elected elements from British India by the nominees of the rulers of one-third of India. The speech ignored the advantage of the whole of India coming under one federal roof. It connived at the fact if Federation is thrown away, we will not have the same momentum for it for another century and therefore the United States of India must remain a midsummer night's nightmare.

The views of the Congress President on India's present and future cannot be lightly dismissed. Congress has always claimed to speak for the bulk of

the people,—not only those who are vocal but also dumb—in spite of the admittedly defective representative machinery to which it has had recourse.*

*Addressing the Congress Subjects Committee, on October 26, while arguing the need for revising the Congress constitution and overhauling the machine of election, in fact replacing the old machine by a new one (he did not say to meet the requirements of the new times created by the new reforms) Mahatma Gandhi questioned the representative character of the Congress delegates. He said that "the delegates should be real representatives of the people. We are indirectly representatives of the nation's dumb millions. We are their mouthpiece, their voice and their thought. That is what Congress has stood for since 1885. But indirectly we are representatives only of our electors. Can any one among us say whom he represents—as to whether he is in living touch with his constituents and knows their feelings? Even the tallest amongst us cannot claim that. Vallabhai is the uncrowned king of Gujarat; but which electorate does he represent? Whom do I represent? I do not know. I challenge any one to produce a Congress register of electors. We must have constituencies and electors and be in living touch with them. Then alone you will have your measuring rod."

CHAPTER XXX

DUAL POLICIES AND PERSONALITIES.

"Truth for ever on the scaffold
Wrong for ever on the throne
Yet that scaffold sways the future
And behind the dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadow
Keeping watch above His own."

—JAMES LOWELL.

This familiar quotation from the poet was not part of a peroration of one of Mr. Winston Churchill's speeches—though well it might have been—denouncing Mr. Baldwin's leadership and attitude towards India. It adorned the conclusion of the speech of the last Congress President, Babu Rajendra Prasad, who reviewed the White Paper at some length. His hostility did not arise, one may presume, from the exclusion of his leader from the Round Table Conference, for Gandhi was included in the list. His hostility arises both from the merits of the Reform Scheme and the methods of the Government summed up in the now-famous phrase "dual policy."

This Dual Policy seems to be the monopoly not only of the Government but also the Opposition, not only in India but also in Great Britain.

Mr. Churchill has a dual policy. He not only wants to smash the Government scheme of Indian Reforms—he has got a scheme of his own—but he

also wants to lead a section of diehards among the Conservatives and bring about the overthrow of Mr. Baldwin's leadership.

Mr. A. G. Gardiner recently described Mr. Churchill's dual purpose and policy in these words :—

“The diehard element of the party, which resisted the grant of self-government to South Africa and Ireland, is still powerful and still untaught by experience.

“It is this faction which Mr. Churchill is mobilising and inspiring for the overthrow of Mr. Baldwin. I do not question the sincerity of Mr. Churchill's views in regard to the future of India. I do not question them because Mr. Churchill has the faculty of being passionately sincere of any side of any question that he happens at the moment to be on. When he was a Liberal, who so enlightened a Free Trader? When he returned to the party he had deserted, who so ready to swallow tariffs? He was a diehard on Ireland when the wind blew in one direction and he was one of the architects of Home Rule for Ireland when the wind blew the other.”

Mr. Churchill therefore has had a dual policy all along. It did not arise with the new situation. Mr. Gardiner says :—

“And so throughout all his variegated career. If he had been in the National Government, I have little doubt that his formidable eloquence would have been at the service of the White Paper. But he was left out in the cold, when that Government was formed and for that shameless affront there is no forgiveness. For however much he may change his political coat or reverse his political judgments, Mr. Churchill is always unalterably loyal to the only

party he really acknowledges—the party that is assembled under his own hat. To this loyalty added to his remarkable gifts, he owed the fact that he had sat in more Cabinets and filled more offices than any man of his time, and a seat on the Treasury Bench in any Government that was going seemed to him almost a divine and inalienable right.”

“Why that right was disregarded when the Government was formed we can only guess. Salisbury said of his father that ‘when you have got rid of a boil on the neck, you do not want it back,’ and it is probable that on the question of whether Mr. Churchill was a greater source of trouble inside a Government or outside, it was decided to take the risk of leaving him out.”

To have left Mr. Churchill out of the Cabinet was a first-class folly of Mr. Baldwin. Owing to his loyalty to the leader of the Conservative Party, Mr. Churchill, though he was in complete agreement with the late Lord Birkenhead, did not utter a word in public on the Indian issue, until he was excluded from the new Government. He was the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the old Government. In spite of his erstwhile Liberal allegiance, Mr. Baldwin invited him to a place in the Cabinet and a rank and position next only to the Prime Minister's. That Mr. Churchill should be dropped out of the Cabinet, because of his views on the Indian problem, was a matter entirely for Mr. Baldwin to decide. The moment the decision was taken Mr. Churchill was free to address the country. Mr. Churchill wants not only to destroy the Reforms scheme but also Mr. Baldwin himself. Here is his double purpose. With one stone he wants to kill two birds. Had Mr. Baldwin borne the boil on the neck, the party would not have developed boils all over the body and spoken the language of agony at Bristol.

Mr. Baldwin had a dual policy in excluding Mr. Churchill from the Cabinet. Not only was he a boil on the neck, but he was an eye-sore to other Conservatives. Mr. Baldwin wanted to get rid of his boil and their sore eye. By excluding Mr. Churchill, the Conservative leader hoped to placate the younger Conservatives with unblemished party records. When one remembers how the diehards have been boiling over India, one must admit the exclusion of Mr. Churchill from the Cabinet was a mistake. Hence, says Mr. Gardiner, his Achillean wrath and his readiness to seize on the Indian issue as the means of heading a Conservative revolt against the leadership of Mr. Baldwin, and so destroying the Government. Whether he will succeed will become apparent soon. But the Bristol vote suggests that, as Wellington said of Waterloo, it will be "a damned near run thing."

The dual policies of Mr. Baldwin and Mr. Churchill have resulted in the tremendous duel over the very principle, the foundation, the life and soul of the Conservative Party itself. Mr. Churchill will gladly split the Party over the Indian issue and form a new Coalition Government in which there will be place for Socialists and Liberals. Probably Mr. Lloyd George prays for Mr. Churchill's success. Sir Austin Chamberlain who was left out of the National Government—though another member of his family is in it—would also be included in Mr. Churchill's Cabinet. Even Mr. Macdonald, if he cares, can be retained though owing to his eye trouble, he might not be so fit as Mr. Churchill for the Prime Minister's job.

Mr. Gardiner thinks that the Government are

threatened with "a triumphant mutiny in their ranks" thanks to the ominous lurch events have taken place at Bristol to the side of Mr. Churchill. In this Liberal Journalist's opinion :

"The vote of the Conservative caucus at Bristol on the Indian question suggests that the rebellion which Mr. Churchill is heading against the official leadership of the party is gaining ground alarmingly."

This rebellion was staged for a critical moment:

"Next month the Joint Select Committee of both Houses of Parliament, which has been sitting for something like a year, will present its report on the proposed new Constitution for India. It will be the business of the Government and of Parliament to translate that report into law. If it fails to do that, the Government will be wrecked. But much more than the Government will be wrecked, the confidence of India in the good faith of the British people will be wrecked too, and that will be the end of our Indian Empire. For one thing is certain. We cannot govern 300 millions of people inhabiting a country nearly as vast as Europe by force. We can only govern it by consent. And consent means the grant of Constitutional Government.

"The issue is in the hands of the Conservatives. They form the overwhelming majority of Parliament, and if they revolt the scheme is doomed. And the danger of a revolt has always been imminent."

The Parliamentary majority is in Mr. Baldwin's pocket. He is sure to command a majority. But equally sure it is that the White Paper scheme will

be modified in certain aspects which its Indian opponents will consider as essential whereas its British apologists will call unconsequential. This modification is rendered inevitable by the diehard revolt at Bristol.*

The modified scheme will not meet with the approval of the diehards who will fight to the very last but it will swing the pendulum to the side of Mr. Baldwin. As Mr. Gardiner observes:

"Mr. Baldwin has two advantages. He is the man in possession, and he is personally trusted. But he is out of step with the most aggressive and bellicose section of his party on the Indian question. On that subject he has throughout been consistent, enlightened and determined; with Lord Irwin he has been chiefly responsible for educating his party and inducing it to follow him so far in the direction of Indian reform without an open rupture. He believes, as all serious students of the question believe, that the White Paper policy is the only alternative to a catastrophe that would make the British 'raj' impossible, and reduce India to chaos. He believes this so profoundly that he has staked his political existence upon it. If the party rejects the White Paper policy it will *ipso facto* reject him."

Under ordinary circumstances, Mr. Baldwin would have retired with his pipe to the village pump—as our own Mahatma with his own Vaishya symbol of dharma, the spinning wheel, to the snows of the Himalayas. When challenged, however, on the Indian issue, Mr. Baldwin is not the man to take a defeat lying down. It is a vital principle which is involved in

*This forecast has been since fulfilled.

the issue. And what is more important, a policy the abandonment of which will result in the loss of India.

The defeat therefore of the Government on the Indian problem would, as Mr. Gardiner put it, destroy the Government and split the Conservative Party in two. For, it must not be forgotten that that party is not composed entirely of diehards. Both in Parliament and in the country—but especially in Parliament—the younger and more enlightened wing of the party is in full agreement with Mr. Baldwin, and if he is repudiated the Conservative structure will be shattered on the biggest issue with which that country has been faced.

The crisis has come with the issue of the Joint Select Committee's report and the Conservative Party meeting at which the question of Baldwin and Churchill was decided. "I think the probabilities are that the party will play for safety rather than adventure, and that Mr. Baldwin will scrape home a winner. But it will be a near run thing, predicted Mr. Gardiner."

Whatever the bitterness between the British diehards and the Government, a suspicion was given expression to by one of the Indian leaders that the Churchill-Baldwin duel was something of a stage management to preserve the British Empire. In Britain the White Paper is considered a great step in advance. That is the reason why the Conservatives have so earnestly and honestly rebelled against it. In India the Churchill-Baldwin quarrel has made little impression.

Could England have set up two personalities and a fight between them to increase the value of the White Paper in the Oriental market? The answer

is an emphatic No. Politicians in power would much rather have the support of the party for their scheme than weaken their hold on it by sowing seeds of suspicion and distrust. Mr. Baldwin is actually distrusted and his judgment is considered as erratic by those who have opposed him. His position and that of the Conservative Party were never so badly shaken in recent years owing to this internal squabble. Those who know the sacredness of party loyalty and the affection in which the members of the party hold the fortune of that party dear will laugh at the idea that Britain has thrown forth dual personalities and adopted a dual policy—one official and the other non-official—in order to make the Joint Select Committee Report acceptable to the Indian constitutionalists. Even though Britain must be acquitted of any such diplomatic move, one must admit that had Britain actually thought of popularizing, so far as possible, the White Paper scheme in India, it could not have done better than by staging the revolt of Mr. Churchill. Surely Winston will be the last man temperamentally to play the part of a pawn in Mr. Baldwin's game. But Britain is greater than Baldwin and both Churchill and Baldwin are patriots and Imperialists and the greater the patriotism, the greater also the capacity for sacrifice. What Mr. Churchill has suffered by being left out of office, he has gained in popularity in his own country and advertisement in India. Mr. Churchill has been the biggest advertisement agent of Mr. Baldwin's reform scheme for which the National Government ought to erect a statue for him facing Clive's at the entrance to the India Office. The new Reforms thrive on old Churchill. Indians would not have looked at them but for Churchill's vehement opposition. The Congress refused to read the White Paper. After the triumph of Churchill at Bristol, the Congress President has

devoted the bulk of his speech to a careful study of the White Paper scheme, after passing over the dual policy of the Government of India, of which he said:—

“The Government policy, which was enunciated by Lord Irwin towards the end of 1929 announcing the convening of the Round Table Conference, has always had a double aspect which has been emphasised more than once by Lord Willingdon’s Government. It has been claimed by the Government that this double policy, on the one hand aims at advancing constitutional reforms, and on the other seeks to suppress what the Government considers to be subversive and revolutionary movements. In pursuance of the first, it is claimed that the Round Table Conference has been convened and proposals have been framed as a result of consultation with Indians and that a Joint Parliamentary Committee is considering them. These proposals are known as the White Paper. In pursuance of the second, the Government has thought it necessary to suppress the Civil Disobedience movement with a heavy hand.”

Any government in the world including Babu Rajendra Prasad’s or Mahatma Gandhi’s would suppress Civil Disobedience. No government can be based on disobedience of laws. But the Congress has certainly a case—if it can present facts and figures after collecting them—on the manner of suppression and the treatment of the suppressed.

For instance, the classification of the civil resisters who were put in jail into A, B, and C was a mistake. All civil resisters should have been given the same treatment and put under the same class as their offence was the same. The C class was more or less the criminal category. The civil resisters come under the political category. Terrorists too come, it may be contended, under the political class, because their motives are political, but there is all the difference between non-violence and violence that divides the terrorist from the civil resister. However, Babu

Rajendra Prasad's description of civil resistance as constitutional agitation is controversial. Non-violent violation of the constitution is as unconstitutional as law-breaking, even though civilly conducted, is lawless. Babu Rajendra Prasad, however, opined that the policy of repression "has not only been much more in evidence and has caused untold suffering to numberless people, but is responsible for the issuing of ordinances and the enactment of laws which have taken away even the ordinary rights of citizenship and laid down drastic penalties and suppressed not only what may be regarded as subversive movements, but effectively prevented perfectly constitutional agitation also."

Here the Congress President is pleading for a dual policy. He must have the right of civil disobedience but those against whom it is directed must not hit back with ordinances and special laws.

It is perfectly true that opposition to civil disobedience has been more in evidence than the pursuit of reforms. The former happened in India, the latter in England. Out of sight out of mind. No wonder repression was more in evidence here than reforms. People outside the esoteric circle of Round Tablers—the favourites of Lord Irwin—would not have given the attention to the reforms but for two things. *First*, the Dominion Status *pledge* of Lord Irwin.* *Secondly*, his following up the pledge with a declaration to implement it by announcing a Round Table Conference. Though he did his best to spoil it later on by filling it with his favourites making it a sort of a political harem of the White Mogul. Apart from the

*The *Statesman* of Oct. 27, in its editorial notes, truly calls the Irwin declaration as the Viceroy's "famous Dominion Status pledge."

composition of the first Round Table Conference and the refusal to choose Dr. M. A. Ansari for the second Round Table Conference, the Assembly Opposition was ignored. The Nationalist Party which was the principal Opposition was treated with contempt by Lord Irwin's Government. Fortunately, it was not malicious. Otherwise it would have spurned the Ottawa Agreement. The Congress at any rate expected it to spurn it and will try to do so at the earliest opportunity. For the Congress has a dual policy. While withdrawing the boycott of the Legislatures, the Congress proposes to persist in a policy of economic boycott. It is not known as yet whether it will revive the old policy of social boycott of official functions and receptions. A section has begun to feel that bad manners are worse than good politics. This civil section, of course, considers that Congress politics through Council opposition is the very best, even if opposition may mean obstruction.

The Congress President is angry with the Government for making the anti-Congress policy more evident to the public mind than the reforms policy. This evidence being the best proof of the triumph of Civil Disobedience from the Congress standpoint, the dual policy must cause no grief or anger. Rather the domination of reforms by repression ought to cheer up the drooping spirits of Congressmen. They should point it as testimony to the power that the Congress has created in the country. Why grumble then about repression? If revolution or civil disturbance, is the purpose, all those who believe in the constitution must uphold it. The Government in no country will bow to the Satyagrahi. Even the Congress President declined to yield to the Satyagrahis from Ajmer. He deplored Satyagraha when directed against the Congress.

Now that Congressmen have come into the Legislatures they must abandon, if their aim is negotiation, the dual policy of saying one thing inside and doing another outside. Having taken the Oath of Allegiance to His Majesty the King, without which they cannot be members of the Legislatures they must abandon the aggressive programme necessary for the pursuit of Sovereign Independence but suicidal from the constitutional point of view of cementing the friendship between Britain and India either by re-opening or if re-opening is not possible, by co-operating in the completion of what remains of the constitutional picture the objective being the fulfilment of the Irwin *pledge* in spirit, if not immediately in letter.

It is doubtful whether in Lord Willingdon's Viceroyalty, the Gandhi-Irwin pact can be revived. It is even more doubtful whether, despite the Mahatma's retirement from political warfare, a Gandhi-Willingdon pact can be entered into. The Constitutional Scheme has not waited the convenience of the Nehrus and Churchills, ignoring whose opposition it has proceeded too far to be withdrawn in a hurry.

The Irwin policy is assailed as double because he gave the pledge of Dominion Status which, Congressmen say, was violated by the ordinances. But the latter were foolish in dishonouring that pledge by declaring Independence and burning the Union Jack at Lahore. The proper thing for them was, as I have said so often and feel so deeply, to proceed to England and see that the pledge was honoured by His Majesty's Government in the new Constitution. The Congress relied on slogans instead of sense, on the power of suffering instead of the power of argument.

Tired of suffering, they have returned to argument. The wiser course would have been to have tried

argument first and then suffering. By resorting to suffering, they alienated British sympathy.

The dual policy of suffering and argument which the Congress believes in would have worked wonderfully had it only known the appropriateness and the use of each. Suffering is the last resort of statesmen. Owing to lack of political experience, sometimes our veterans seem to act like charlatans. Arabinda Ghose said somewhere that our veterans were amateurs when judged by the difficulty of the circumstances that face them.

A good dual policy for the Congress might have saved it from quicksands and quagmires. The Mahatma has the policy of going to the village and of confining to spinning. The Congress leaders must have enforced the spinning of the volunteers and fixed the production of certain quantity of yarn during the Truce period and then conducted their peaceful negotiations in England until the introduction of the new Reforms Bill in Parliament;—the constructive programme of khaddar for the rank and file and the provincial leaders and hard work for All-India leaders in Committees and Conferences. Those who were not in them could have done propaganda outside persuading the British masses. It is the lack of a dual policy of the right type—Constructive programme in India and organized propaganda in England—that has brought down the Congress from the heights that it had reached.



PART III



CHAPTER XXXI

CONGRESS VIEW OF THE NEW REFORMS.

"The Viceroy or Governor-General was armed with all the powers of a Hitler or a Mussolini. By a stroke of pen, he could scatter the constitution and decree any law to be passed or martial law, which was no law at all. Of all these he was the sole judge. Such a functionary was a dictator and he had a very powerful army."

RT. HON'BLE WINSTON CHURCHILL.

The President of the Congress based his criticism of the new Reforms on the above passage from one of the brilliant attacks of Mr. Winston Churchill on the White Paper. "Mr. Churchill described the position admirably," said the Congress President amidst loud and continued applause, quoting the passage quoted at the top.

Mr. Churchill appears to be the only friend of the National Congress! His point of view appeals, from another angle of vision, to the Congress. Besides no one has pointedly referred to the folly of proceeding with the reforms with their principal opponent un placated. So long as the National Congress stands out refusing co-operation, Mr. Churchill does not believe in going ahead with the new reforms. What is the use, asks he, of reforms which will not remove but only accentuate the Indian discontent. The Congress President has said enough to show that the Congress will try to fulfil Mr. Churchill's prediction.

Babu Rajendra Prasad dwelt on the omissions and commissions of His Majesty's Government in his review and criticism of their Reform Scheme. He was not going to suspend judgment till the Joint Select Committee had produced its report as suggested by Lord Stanley, the Governor of Madras in his address to the Madras Legislative Council*. He was not concerned with what effect his words would have in England. Would they not add to the difficulties of the National Government? If so, so much the better was apparently the Congress President's view. His Majesty's Government have done their worst. And now it is the turn of the Congress President to encourage the Opposition headed by Mr. Churchill to the passing of the Government of India Bill. The best propaganda that Sir Samuel Hoare can do to convince Conservative opponents to the Reform Scheme who describe it as "surrender" will be to publish broadcast the Congress view of it.

The Congress President gravely opined that there was not only no surrender of any power in the new reforms but on the contrary India was being taken away from the road to Dominion status on which the

*In his farewell address to the Madras Legislative Council on October 25, His Excellency Sir George Stanley said:

"Before long the report of the Joint Select Committee will be published. I know no more than you do as to what it contains, but I make this appeal not only to the members of the Council but all gentlemen who have any influence in the Presidency, that I would beg them to study the report very carefully and in its entirety before expressing any opinion on it. Every chance remark uttered in this country against the recommendations, whatever they may be, will be seized on by the opponents of self-government and will be used to make infinitely more difficult the task of those who, like myself, believe that self-government can, and should be granted to India."

late Edwin Montagu had set her feet firmly. The Congress stood for "complete control over the Army, the Finances, Foreign Relations and the internal administration," all of which its President contended were denied in the new scheme of Sir Samuel Hoare. "The White Paper," explained the President amid the cheers of the huge audience which he addressed, "is nothing if it is not a negation of all these items and if it does not bar even a gradual progress towards any of them." He went on to say :

"I take leave to point out that the proposals of the White Paper do not take us anywhere near what our moderate countrymen aim at, viz, Dominion Status, not to speak of complete Independence which is the Congress goal. In fact, they take the country in some respects in the opposite direction and leave it in a position constitutionally worse than that now occupied under the Montagu-Chelmsford Reform."

The Congress President examined the new reform proposals in the light of four tests: (1) how far the proposed new legislatures will be representative of the nation; (2) how far the powers alleged to be transferred to popular control are real in the Centre and the Provinces; (3) what the powers proposed to be transferred in regard to the Finances are, and what additional burdens India will have to bear for the new constitution, and (4) whether the proposed constitution contains within itself any elements of growth and development.

The first objection of the Congress President to the Federal Legislature in the new reform scheme is that the present nominated *bloc* would disappear and that its successor would be much worse. It would seem that the Congress President would prefer the devil he knew to the devil he did not know. The

much-maligned nominated officials and non-officials would be angels when one contemplated the sort of wild men from the States and backwoods of civilization who would replace them! He said:

"It is sought to replace the block of officials and non-officials nominated by the Government by nominees of Indian States, joining the Federation. The nominated officials and non-officials of British India cannot be said to be amenable to popular opinion but they have certainly a wider outlook and are more in contact with public opinion than any nominee of a State could be.

"They also feel a sense of responsibility even though it is to the British Government and not to the people of India."

This is the first time that the nominated members of an alien Government—cursed with bell, book and candle by Congressmen and Congress press—received some charitable recognition at the hands of the Congress President! The Congress President did not think that the State representatives would be so good as the present nominated officials or non-officials, even though they will be nominees of either the State Legislative Council or the States' Rulers who being Babu Rajendra Prasad's countrymen have taken a keen interest in the welfare of the people in British India and generously contributed to Bihar Earthquake Relief Fund and educational, medical and other useful institutions in British India. Even though willing to parley, if another opportunity occurs, with Great Britain which is more ignorant of India than the States, the Congress President seriously wondered: "Will the State nominees have any information about or acquaintance with events happening in British India from which the States have been in a way kept segregated?" The

people in the Indian States are likewise asking: what do Babu Rajendra Prasad and his class in British India know about Indian States and yet why do they encourage agitation in the States?

The merest tyro in politics will be able to say that the Federation will not encourage interference of British India representatives with affairs beyond their federal jurisdiction. The same restriction will be imposed on the States' representatives in regard to British Indian politics.

On essential subjects, however, there will be joint responsibility in the Cabinet which will consist of State and British India representatives and also in the open Legislature. It is here that the Congress President fears that the obstructionists of the future, who would like to reject the Finance Bill or censure the Ministry, will be at a disadvantage.

He fears that "the only effect of the replacement of the nominated block by States' nominees will be a tightening of the British control coupled with traditions of a more autocratic rule and greater disregard of popular wishes than we are accustomed to in British India and which these nominees will bring with themselves."

Here are indications that an attempt would be made to form a British Indian block opposed to the Indian States. It will also aim at conducting agitation against the 'autocratic rule' in those States. Without however going much into the future—sufficient unto the day are the evils thereof!—could not the Congress President have conceded that contact with democracy in British India will influence the Indian States to democratize their institutions?

Not only was he afraid of the autocratic character

and traditions of the State block in the Federation, he was also bewildered by their numerical strength. Said the Congress President :

"But apart from its bearing the character of a nominated block, it will also be a larger block numerically. Under the Montagu Reforms out of 145 members of the Assembly 40 or 27.5 per cent. are nominated, if we exclude the member for Berar who for practical purposes is an elected member; under the White Paper proposals out of a House of 375 no less than 125 or 33.3 per cent. are nominated by the States—an increase in the nominated element of 6 per cent."

The question of numbers ought to frighten the Congress President the least who agreed with the Mahatma that the number of members of the unofficial Parliament of India namely the All-India Congress Committee should be raised to 1,000 which would probably include also representatives from the Indian States. By way of compromise the figure was fixed at 2,000. Extraordinary Parliament must it be consisting of 2,000 members !

What actually frightens the Congress President is the separate electorate in British India which the Congress has disapproved though it has at the same time repudiated Pundit Malaviya's opposition to the Communal Award. The spirit underlying the Communal Award and the communal electorate is the same. But the elected members of a separate electorate may not care to play to the Congress gallery or prefer the Congress to their own political convictions. Said the Congress President :

"When we look at the composition of the elected element in the Federal Assembly we find that separate electorates have not only been retained but consider-

ably extended and the number of those generally expected to side with the British and the Governor-General considerably increased. I believe, in the place of 41 out of 104 or 39 per cent. being returned by separate electorates under the existing constitution, we shall have 103 out of 250 or 43 per cent. returned by separate electorate under the White Paper scheme. Thus, there can be hardly any doubt that the White Paper Federal Assembly will be a less progressive and more autocratically inclined body than the present Assembly."

And then there is the grim spectre of the Upper House ready to undo the mischief or the good—according to opinion—done by the Lower House. The Congress President thought it "unnecessary to go into the constitution of the Second Chamber which is bound to be less progressive than the popular house. In a joint session, which is provided for, the nominated element will be as much as 235 out of 636 or 37 per cent. and a motion of no-confidence in connection with a subject relating to British India against a British Indian minister can never secure a two-thirds majority if the State nominees chose to maintain the ministry."

Here is a case for boycott of the Reformed Legislature whenever it comes, though the Congress President who was thinking in terms of mass action wisely left matters there!

"Let us not be led away by the idea that Swaraj can be achieved by anything we can do in the legislature. For us there is no turning back. The goal is clear. It is nothing short of independence. The method, too, is crystal clear. It is active non-violent mass action," declared the Congress President.

The Congress enthusiasm for the last elections to the old Assembly is probably due to their apprehension

that its successor is going to be a much worse one. They want to make speeches inside so long as the constitution lasts. Their policy is one of making hay while the sun shines. And when the sun of the old constitution sets, a full moon might slowly sail into the sky whose light might not be piercing but all the same pleasant. And Congressmen might prefer the moonlight of Sir Samuel Hoare to the sunlight of the late Edwin Montagu trying to run the Government in the Provinces after sweeping the polls. Probably a section of no-changers might rely on reviving what the Congress President terms mass action in which case the Swarajists and Malaviya-ites will combine on a Council-entry programme, not afraid of a split or even a secession. Where convictions are concerned, the desire to preserve arid unity becomes meaningless.

Even in regard to provincial autonomy, the Congress President has no use. His criticism does not inspire a desire to enter the Provincial Councils and use the resources of a Provincial Government to fulfil the Mahatma's own industrial programme. The object of the Congress, if it has faith in Gandhi, even though temporarily his faith has shaken, should be to enforce the programme of the new Village Industries Association. As electric power is now available in distant villages—or can be made available—the work of the village spinner and weaver can be made easy. The mechanical age crowded the village labourers into the factories of the towns. In India the villager has degenerated by going into the towns. The factory owners have woefully neglected to provide for the convenience and comforts of the labourers. Mahatma Gandhi will wonderfully succeed in his scheme if he unites to his ambition to revive village industries, the necessity of providing every village in India with cheap electric power. Also, the new popular Provincial

Governments will be helpful in not only combatting the money-lending Shylocks who crush the life of the village workmen by spreading out a system of co-operative credit run on efficient lines by competent and self-sacrificing men but also, if necessary, provided there is money to be had, in subsidizing large-scale model industries of the village type. Village industries thrive today in Central Europe. They declined in India because of the policy of the Government which Sir Hayman Wilson had strongly criticised in his writings. The late Romesh Chunder Dutt wrote how the miserable clothing of the miserable Indian labourer was taxed by 'a jealous Government.' All this is past history. Now even the Anglo-Indian (old style) commercial community has begun to sympathise with the Mahatma's move to start the Village Industries Association.* The European commercial classes feel the competition of Japan and the Indian mills. Therefore they would prefer the cottage industries, which cannot compete on equal terms with the West, to their modern rival—the mills and factories.

Whatever the motive, the support that the Mahatma has received from the European community is welcome. In future, they at least will not torpedo any large support given by the autonomous Provincial Governments to the Village Industries on the plea of commercial discrimination.

The President-elect of the Congress was alarmed by these discriminatory clauses in the new Reforms. He said:

"In the name of preventing commercial discrimination against the British, it is really ensured that

*The *Statesman* blessed the Mahatma's Village Industries Association in its issue of October 28.

the Indian should be discriminated against in the future as he has been in the past. It must be the experience of all businessmen who have anything to do with the Government—and they cannot move an inch without coming across the Government in some form or another—how at every step they have to face situations which a Britisher here has not to face. Go to the coal-fields. They will tell you how it is difficult for an Indian colliery-owner to get a railway siding to his colliery, how it is difficult for him to get wagons and how the Indian is every-day discriminated against in practice. I am not mentioning how it has been possible for a few British concerns to get leases of practically the whole area with the best seams of coal and how Indians have to be content with second and third class collieries and even these they get with difficulty. I am not forgetting that colliery lands are largely owned by Indians. We know how these things are managed, specially when the owner happens to be a ward of court. The manipulation of railway freights offers an easy handle. When I was looking after the affairs of the All-India Spinners' Association in my Province I calculated some years ago that the cost of transport of cotton from Sewan (in the district of Saran where cotton is largely grown) to Madhubani in the district of Darbhanga where we produce our best and largest quantity of Khadi, both the districts being within the same division of Tirhut under a Commissioner, was the same as that of transporting cotton from Bombay to Japan and bringing back the cloth made of that cotton to Bombay. I do not know if there has been a change in this respect recently. Similarly, I was told that the cost of transporting coal from South Africa to Indian cotton mills was the same as that of transport-

ing it from the coal-fields of Bihar to the same mills. I am mentioning these few illustrations and they can be multiplied to show how in the past the whole policy of the Government of India has been regulated with an eye not to the benefit of Indians but of foreigners, and if by any chance any Minister has the temerity to try to be just, he will at once be held up as discriminating against the Britisher and the Governor-General or the Governor will have no difficulty in invoking his special responsibility for perpetuating the injustice."

A strong ministry is the only preventive to the easy exercise of the special responsibility of the Governor or the Governor-General. So long as the Congress relies on Direct Action instead of Parliamentary Action, it is not possible to have a strong ministry. No ministry can act strongly for constructive purposes so long as a continued attempt is made in the country to discredit it not on what it has failed to achieve but on the mere ground that it is cooperating with an alien bureaucracy. Had the Congress directed its 'mass action' of which its President still dreams, for securing the removal of the discrimination against Indians just quoted, the lowering of the Railway rates and the revival of the cottage industries, it would have achieved its object long ago, all its sorrows and sacrifices would not have gone in vain, and Direct Action itself would not have been discredited by its futility and demanded of its votaries an infinite capacity for endless suffering. When the purpose of Direct Action is not to serve as a stimulus for the eradication of a just grievance but for the extirpation of the Government, no wonder it arouses relentless opposition from the party whose annihilation is aimed at. The best

way to force the Governor and the Governor-General to use their special powers is to abuse the purpose of Direct Action.

Babu Rajendra Prasad complained that in the new Reform scheme "the discretionary powers of the Governor-General and the Governors are of a most drastic kind. Under the existing constitution, the Governor has the power of certification and veto, but under the proposal embodied in the White Paper, he can also send message to the legislature not to proceed with a certain measure of legislation as also to proceed in a certain way; not to pass certain laws as also to pass certain others or that a particular measure must be passed by a particular date and in the event of the legislature refusing or failing to obey his command, it will become a Governor-General's or Governor's Act which will have the force of an Act of legislature without having the odium attached to the name of 'ordinance' and without the fetters of a limited duration, which an ordinance has. These proposals place India under a virtual dictatorship."

But who started the plan of dictatorship? It does not lie in the mouth of the Congress President to complain of dictatorship when the Congress appointed dictators in every district in which they had any influence during its stormy, if short-lived, career of Civil Disobedience. The discretionary and special powers in the new Reform scheme with which the Governor and the Governor-General are vested are a tribute to the triumph that the Congress which has no equally powerful non-official rival in India, has achieved by way of troubling the political waters and disturbing the mass mind. Lest the Congress should use the autonomous Governments in the Provinces to achieve

its purpose of driving the British bag and baggage from India, the Governor and Governor-General have been given extraordinary powers. If, however, the Congress settles down to a Parliamentary existence and contents itself with constitutional methods, the supporters of the new reforms say that the special powers will never be used.

But does not the Congress still think of reviving civil disobedience? It is still endeavouring to create a revolutionary atmosphere to get rid of the British. There are two ways of getting rid of British supremacy. One is by friendship, the other by revolution. If Dominion Status is the goal, Indians must try to win it by constitutional agitation. If independence is the goal, then the method is revolution. It is useless for the Congress President to condemn the special powers of the Governor and Governor-General because the Congress has not abandoned its aggressive policy and its programme to promote a revolution* which has created panic in England necessitating the adequate

*Addressing an audience of 80,000, according to newspaper report, on the second day of the Congress session, the Chairman of the Reception Committee, seconding a resolution said that there were Congressmen in the country who had conscientious objections to the Congress Parliamentary Board programme, but he pointed out that every country fighting for freedom had made use of the country's legislatures, however defective. He admitted that freedom could not be achieved through the Council (Cheers). Still there was no harm in using them for preparing for the coming 'fight' and the creation of a 'revolutionary' mentality. He felt certain, if they carried out the Parliamentary programme and worked in the country especially in the villages, they would be able to give a better and tougher battle to the enemies of Indian freedom. He was sure that in less than 10 years, there would once more be a great movement for freedom and revolution in India (Cheers).

statutory provision of safeguards and extraordinary powers to meet extraordinary circumstances—legalizing despotism lest the constitution should break down and the carrying on of the King's Government be made impossible. The Congress has made it impossible for Sir Samuel Hoare to concede more* than the White Paper scheme by its own sensational programme.

If the object is to goad India to a revolution within less than ten years, why blame the British Government for arming themselves with special powers and responsibilities? Is the talk of revolution a bluff? Why blame England for treating it seriously so long as the talk is indulged in?

*Dr. M. A. Ansari, the leader of the Parliamentary wing of the Congress, met His Majesty's Ministers during his visit to England, in the company of His Highness the Nawab of Bhopal, in the summer of 1934. His own impression of the visit and the conversations he had with the men of consequence in England bears out our opinion that the Congress has roused such hostility in England that Sir Samuel Hoare cannot improve on the White Paper scheme which may be whittled away to placate Tory opposition. Dr. Ansari writes in the Congress Number of *National Call*:

"While the nature of the talk between myself and Lord Sankey, Lord Irwin and Sir Samuel Hoare differed in the language in which the three great British politicians expressed their views, it was curiously the same.

"All the three pressed hard that the White Paper represented the maximum of change in the Indian constitution which the British parties to-day could accept.

"Sir Samuel Hoare in his parting appeal said that whether it was looked at from the point of view of India or England, it would be a great disaster if the Constitution was delayed or withheld.

"However deficient the White Paper may be, it would be good for India to accept it and for England to concede it.

"No Secretary of State, he pointed out, however sympathetic he might be towards India and no Government,

What is the Congress programme? Let its President answer:

"Let us not be led away by the idea that Swaraj can be achieved by anything we could do in the legislatures. We have to remember that the price for freedom must be paid before we can get it, and while we have every reason to be proud of what has been done and what the country has suffered it is, after all, yet inadequate for the great object we have in view. The task we have taken upon ourselves is great.....

"The method too is crystal clear. It is active dynamic non-violent mass action. We may fail once; we may fail twice; but we are bound to succeed some day. Many have already lost their lives and all. Many more have sacrificed themselves in their struggle for freedom. Let us not be deterred by the difficulties which confront us nor diverted from our straight course by fear or favour."

Thus we have the unvarnished statement of the Congress President that the Congress does not stand for Parliamentary Action in which it has no faith but in the blowing up of Parliaments with the help of non-violent Guy Fawkes until it establishes its own Parliament based on truth and non-violence which will have no need for an army or the police, because there will be good-will on earth and peace among men. The Congress President seriously said that the "sanction behind this independence movement is non-violence which in its positive and dynamic aspect is

whatever its composition, could do more than was being done for India to-day. He appealed to all Congressmen and particularly to Mahatma Gandhi that they should not reject the White Paper but work the new constitution."

good-will of and for all. We already see signs of how it has begun appealing to a certain extent to world opinion. This appeal has to become irresistible. It can do so according as the element of distrust and suspicion which has its birth in fear is eliminated and replaced by a sense of security born of confidence in the good-will of India. India having no designs on others will not then need a large army either for its protection against foreigners or for internal peace which will stand guaranteed by the good-will of her inhabitants. Having no designs on others she will be able to claim immunity from the evil designs of others and her safety will be buttressed and protected by the good-will of the world at large."

The Congress people seem to rest their faith, their fate and their future on "the good-will of the world." The world is made of men and not angels. And men being what they are, nations will not be free from the designs from which the Congress hopes India will be free. Imagine poor India of the pre-Mohammedan period which had no design on others! How did the Muslims come to India? How again did the British come? It was not because India had a design on England. The Japanese have a desire to trade with India. And if India has no army nor the support of the British navy, would Japan have no desire to increase her trade by establishing the same intimate contact which a similarly situated European island has tried to establish during the last century and a half? There will never be the good-will of the world so long as people seek not the good but the goods of each other. There would have been no need for the Vedas, the Qur-an or the Bible, for Krishnas, Buddhas and Christs if the world was essentially good. Moreover, nature is red in tooth and claw. The lion can never become a Satyagrahi where the lamb and

hunger are concerned. A world devoid of designs and desires will be unnatural. It will not be the world of man. It will be a heaven of angels. Meantime, for the policy of the Congress to succeed, it has to overthrow British rule in India and it is for that overthrow that the Congress President calls for dynamic mass action. It is to prevent that overthrow that the new reforms, while releasing new opportunities, have re-armed the representatives of Britain with new powers, to see that progress is orderly and law is maintained and peace upheld.

The Congress policy is the peaceful disturbance of peace, 'dynamic' and yet 'non-violent.' This dynamic non-violence is to emanate from a non-violent dynamo. It is not an extinct volcano but an active one, of a new type emitting non-violent lava. Why should Britain be afraid of facing it? "Independence ought not to frighten even the British," observes the Congress President with a *naivete*, "unless they aim at perpetuating the present unnatural conditions." An expensive army, a costly police and so on and so forth are all unnatural from the *Ahimsa* point of view but not nature's. The Congress President aspires to live—to see that India lives—in a paradise of *Ahimsa*. Though *Ahimsa* is undoubtedly *paramo dharma*, even if there is universal disarmament, India with a mixed population and violent neighbours and vulnerable frontiers cannot lay down the arms.

Her Police will have to be strengthened in the future. She should have a Navy of her own worthy of her long sea coast. And Indianization of the Army, while meaning less expenditure, must never mean reduction of the present strength of the forces in India.

Every democrat and patriot will of course sympathise and support the Congress President's condemnation of the special responsibilities, but at the same time one cannot help pointing out that, so long as the Congress does not give up its warlike methods and objective to drive the British out of India, the Government will not listen to the Moderates but rely on their own strength and resources. The Congress President said:

"Special responsibilities are laid down under seven heads for the Governor-General. They are (I) the prevention of grave menace to the peace or tranquillity of India or any part thereof; (II) the safeguarding of the financial responsibility and credit of the Federation; (III) the safeguarding of the legitimate interests of minorities; (IV) the securing to the members of the Public Services of any right provided for them by the Constitution Act and the safeguarding of their legitimate rights; (V) the prevention of Commercial discrimination; (VI) the protection of the rights of Indian States; and (VII) any matter which affects the administration of any department under the direction and control of the Governor-General, the Governor-General being empowered in each case to determine whether any special responsibility is involved in any given circumstance. The same powers are given *mutatis mutandis* to the Governor in so far as they are applicable to provinces. The first practically takes away with one hand what it purports to give with the other; law and order though said to be transferred in the provinces are thus kept quite safe within the double lock of special responsibility of the Governor-General and the Governor. The elasticity of this phrase is quite well-known in this

country and I am using no language of exaggeration if I say that it is mere camouflage and a fraud to say that law and order are being transferred when the special responsibility in this respect is reserved in the wide and all-pervasive terms as is done under the White Paper proposal."

The Congress President's criticism is unexceptionable. But the Congress alone is responsible for creating that distrust in the British mind which envelops the new constitution. There is, for instance, the fear that the Congressmen might, once they are in power, use the Police to promote the Congress purpose of eliminating the British and discrediting the *Raj*. "The prevention of a grave menace" is sought in the special responsibilities. It is a counterblast to the promotion of a new mass movement aimed at overthrowing the constitution after capturing it.

The Congress Government in the Provinces can help the Civil Disobedience movement by not acting against the patriotic law-breakers. Patriotism from the Congress point of view might be treason from that of its opponents. There might be civil disturbance of a political kind in which the Police may be ordered by the Minister in charge merely to watch and wait. The Governor and the opponents of the Congress might agree in thinking that it is only making administration difficult from office by non-cooperating from inside. So long as the Congress is allied to a law-breaking programme and does not abandon its republican aim so long, notwithstanding the protests of the Constitutionalists, Britain would adhere to special responsibilities, until the Constitutionalists themselves develop as much power and "sanction" as the constitution-breakers.

There is again much public sympathy for the

Congress President's disapproval of the financial restraints :

"As regards the second, admittedly definition of this responsibility is drawn in wide terms and enables the Governor-General to step in whenever any proposal of the Minister regarding budgetting or borrowing is considered by him as prejudicing or endangering India's credit in the money market of the world. Past experience has shown that financial stability and credit of India are synonymous with British profit at the expense of India, and British interests have been served so often and so brazen-facedly in the name of India's stability and credit that no Indian is likely to be deceived by words which connote more than their ordinary dictionary meaning. The entire currency and exchange policy of the Government is said to be dictated by these considerations and we know it to our cost how a stroke of the pen or an apparently innocent notification of the Government has the effect of transferring crores from the hands of Indians to those of the British without the former realising it."

That India must have fiscal and financial control is the plea that has gone forth from the old Industrial Conferences of the Moderates. When financial autonomy was within a measurable distance of achievement, the Congress passed a resolution that when Swaraj was attained it would repudiate national debts incurred by an alien power without the people's authority. When there is a danger of people with this mentality coming into power, until that mentality changes and a sense of financial responsibility is developed, His Majesty's Government apparently thought it necessary to preserve the financial credit from violation. It is very very unfortunate that there

should be these financial handicaps. The Congress can make things easy by abandoning its thunders and seriously settling down to constitutional agitation against these harassing restrictions which can be got rid of by powerful Ministers collaborating with a powerful legislature whose combination will smooth every rub in the way. The Governor-General assisted by the Financial Adviser would be the last man to try conclusions with the Minister for Finance who has the support of the legislature, if he is convinced that they do not aim at obstruction and play for a General Election to discredit the bureaucracy. But the Congress Ministry will have every constitutional right to discredit the bureaucracy if the Governor-General abuses his special powers by appealing to the democracy after creating a first class Cabinet crisis.

There is, of course, the danger that Congress will never be able to become a majority in the Federation. The new Constitution can be so manipulated as to prevent a permanent Congress majority. The Congress President probably apprehends that this will somehow happen when he says:

"The third will, of course, come very handy in turning many an awkward corner. Our Muslim brethren and others who are in a minority are apt to run away with the idea that the British Government is reserving special responsibility to safeguard their interests. Really speaking, if there is anything more calculated than another to keep all the communities warring with each other, it is this. Besides it is a delusion to think that the safeguards are devised to serve any of the Indian minorities. They will find in actual working, that after all in all matters of moment it is not they who are meant but the small microscopic minority of those birds of passage, who come from

thousands of miles and make hay while the sun shines and then disappear in the evening of their days to enjoy the fruits in their native land again."

Whether the Muslim, European, and Anglo-Indian minorities will combine or not, it is for the Congress to convince the largest minority community before it claims to be National. Probably its opposition to the Mahasabha and the Nationalist party of Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviya arose from its desire to win over to its side a larger number of Muslims by increasing the influence of Dr. M. A. Ansari and other Muslim Congressmen. However that be, if the Congress President is convinced that it is a delusion that the safeguards are devised to serve the interests of Indian minorities as actual experience will show, then surely he may rely on the experiment working in his favour. It is better then to experiment—to put the chemicals together and await the crystallization of disillusionment to the exploited and the exploiting minorities. Referring to the fourth item of the Civil Services, the President said:

"The fourth destroys whatever is yet left of autonomy. We shall, indeed, be masters in our own house without having the power to order our servants about, to whom we shall be bound to pay their unbearably high salaries, guarantee their pensions and leaves and promotion and what not. It will be easy enough for these so-called Civil Servants to set at naught not only the policy, decisions and orders of their so-called superiors—the Ministers—but to create deadlocks, which will be set down to the discredit of Indians who will be branded as incompetent, and inexperienced ministers to whom it was a mistake, it will be said, to transfer powers."

It has been a complaint that our Ministers do not

have the control over the Services that the British Ministers have over theirs. This fact is a defect of the transition from a bureaucratic to a democratic system. When the evolution is complete, the defect will disappear. Under Provincial Autonomy, the services will be more acceptable and amenable than they were under dyarchy. The whole system requires careful revision after an enquiry which is provided for in the White Paper. Must there be the highly paid Civil Service for Indians? Must they have the same standard of pay as Europeans because they have the same qualifications? Must it not be considered as a patriotic opportunity for the Indian to serve his country through the Public Service as it is considered by Englishmen in England? The Englishman in the Service has to maintain two establishments—one in England where he educates his children, the other in India where he lives to work. The Indian, on the contrary, is not an exile. The Englishman in England can live on less than the Indian in England. The Englishman in India spends more than he will in his own country. The exiles in the Services are entitled to a better pay than the indigenous. For the sake of economy this distinction has to be explored before a decision is reached. Henceforward, power, position and prospects should depend not on pay but on service and ability.

Referring to the Indian States, the President said: "We have already had illustrations how activities of their subjects in favour of constitutional reforms can be throttled and the special responsibility of the Governor-General or Governor in this respect will be used for preventing the virus of democracy from spreading into these States."

The old Congress policy in regard to the Indian States was one of non-interference. The new Congress

policy appears to be to encourage the disturbance of the contentment of the States subjects which their rulers resent, even though lip service is done to the continuance of non-intervention.* The Congress President is quite wrong if he thinks that the Governor-General can prevent the spirit of democracy animating the State subjects. It has already begun to animate the rulers of important States who have introduced radical reforms. They may appear small from British Indian standpoint, because our Councils have more power. Surely Britain which gave this much power cannot support the desire of reactionary rulers denying the same to their aspiring subjects. If the subjects of the States are wise, they will ask for a voice in the administration instead of a choice of rulership. The latter smells of revolutionary Socialism which is menacing the Congress and the country whereas the

*M. Gandhi has prepared a draft formula indicating the Congress Working Committee's future attitude towards the States which will be one of theoretical non-interference but practical sympathy with the States subjects' agitation:

"As numerous resolutions have been received from various groups for the adoption by the Congress and urging it to define its policy in regard to Indian States, it is hereby resolved as follows: "The Congress adheres to its policy of non-interference in the internal administration of the various States. The Congress, however, regards the whole of geographical India as an indivisible whole notwithstanding the fact it is cut up into parts governed under different systems and, therefore, expresses its regret over the tendency of some Princes to regard as foreigners Indians from parts of India other than their own and repeats its appeal made at the previous sessions of the Congress to establish responsible Government within their jurisdiction and recognise the necessity for guaranteeing civil and political liberty of the people, living in their territories. This Congress assures the people residing in the different States of full sympathy with their just aspiration for fuller self-expression."

former follows the track of evolutionary, radical Nationalism.

Among other things, the Congress President said :

"The White Paper proposals further take away certain powers which are now possessed by the Assembly in however attenuated a form they may be. Thus, a discussion of the Railway budget used to furnish an opportunity for the ventilation of grievance in connection with the railway administration. Railways could now be discussed and voted upon by the Central Legislature but the creation of the proposed statutory railway authority would have the effect of precluding the future Government and legislature from making any effective criticism of any matter transferred to the statutory authority. That this is not a negligible matter is apparent from the fact that the Railways have some 800 crores invested in them and are very largely national concerns already and where they are not so they are soon passing into the hands of the State."

The concern of the Congress President for the present Assembly and its powers must not only evoke sympathy but also pity. If ventilation of grievance is the desire and not the power to remove it, the present powerless Assembly has been and can continue to serve as an excellent ventilator. The new Railway Authority will transfer to a majority of Indians nominated by the Railway Minister the power of controlling and conducting the administration of the Railways. The Railway Committee in London of which the writer was a member was not unanimous in its recommendation. If the Congress President was fair-minded, he would have given a tribute to the work of the Indian non-official members of the Assembly who have recommended that the Ministerial

control of the Railway Authority must be as real as in South Africa. That the Congress President should repeat the ignorant criticisms of ill-informed writers that the existing power of the Assembly is taken away is surprising. This 'able' speech, however, discloses a clear lack of grasp of the powerlessness of the Assembly and the new power that is coming. The present Railway Minister is not responsible to the Assembly. He is not bound to carry out its wishes. The future Railway Minister will be responsible to the Federal Assembly. On a censure motion, the Opposition can say all that the present Assembly has been saying by way of ventilating grievances. It can also, by carrying the motion, remove the Minister or the Ministry as a whole. If today the Assembly carries a censure motion, it will have no more Constitutional effect than pouring water on duck's back.

CHAPTER XXXII

CONGRESS REVOLT IN THE ASSEMBLY

Like one that stands upon a promontory
And spies a far off shore where he would tread,
Wishing his foot were equal with his eye;
And chided the sea that sunders him from thence,
Saying that he will læd it dry to have his way;
So do I wish the crown, being so far off,
And so I chide the means that keep me from it,
And so do I say I'll cut the causes off
Flattering me with impossibilities.

—SHAKESPEARE.

Sir Malcolm Hailey, the then Home Member of the Government of India, said that the Swarajists in the Assembly reminded him of the character described by Shakespeare. It was on the 30th of January 1924 that the Swarajists took the Oath or made the affirmation in the manner prescribed. Sir Malcolm Hailey delivered his first onslaught on 8th February which was a non-official day—more correctly one of the three special days set apart for non-official purposes—as one day was not enough for a fair discussion of a momentous question.

That question was raised by Diwan Bahadur T. Rangachariar, an elder statesman noted for his nationalist outlook and moderation of language, who did not belong to the Congress party. He was then the Deputy President of the Assembly—a position since adorning or adorned by younger men. The

Diwan Bahadur's resolution which put in a nutshell the National demand ran thus:

"This Assembly recommends to the Governor-General in Council that he be pleased to take at a very early date the necessary steps (including if necessary procuring the appointment of a Royal Commission) for revising the Government of India Act so as to secure for India full self-governing Dominion Status within the British Empire and Provincial autonomy in the Provinces."

The Congress party did not approve of the words within brackets. This indicated the cleavage between the Moderates and Congressmen whom the late Lord Birkenhead united, as subsequent events showed, by excluding Indians from "an all-White Commission" which he sent out to India in reply to this demand.

Pundit Motilal Nehru, the Leader of the Opposition, tabled an amendment which may be quoted:

"That the following be substituted for the original resolution:

This Assembly recommends to the Governor-General in Council to take steps to have the Government of India Act revised with a view to establish full responsible Government in India for the said purpose:

(a) To summon at an early date a representative Round Table Conference to recommend with due regard to the protection of rights and interests of important minorities the scheme of a constitution for India; and

(b) After dissolving the Central Legislature to place the said scheme before a newly-elected Indian legislature for its approval and submit the

same to the British Parliament to be embodied in a statute."

The amendment was carried by 76 votes Government getting only 48. The Moderates voted for the resolution as amended. If the Left Wing of the Swaraj Party of which Mr. V. J. Patel was the leader who held stronger views had its way, the amendment would have been defeated. The amendment was really a compromise arrived at by the Opposition parties.

Sir Malcolm who intervened early in the debate presented the Government case with striking ability and biting eloquence. Referring to Congress threats if the demand was not accepted, he said:

"I am addressing the members of this Assembly, and as members of the Assembly, I can only regard them as bound to constitutional ideals and methods. Indeed with regard to such threats I prefer to take much the same attitude as Pundit Motilal Nehru himself in dealing with the resolutions of the Gaya Congress:

'It is,' *he said*, "a hotch-potch of pious wishes, with a few threats thrown in to season the dish for the acceptance of the more impatient non-co-operator' (laughter)."

Pundit Motilal Nehru who was a speaker noted for his precision, moderation and restraint, presented the Congress case with remarkable tact. Referring to the Congress position, the Pundit said:

"Now, Sir, our submission is—and I am glad that the Honourable the Home Member has not been able to point to anything that I have said before I came to this House which conflicts with what I am able to submit now (laughter)—we in the Congress have demanded ever since the year 1919 full responsible Government; call it Swaraj, call it Dominion Status, call it anything you like."

The one important revelation of that debate was that the Government, while actually opposing the resolution, were anxiously looking ahead. "I have to ask," said Sir Malcolm Hailey, "three or perhaps four questions of the Assembly. Is Dominion Self-government to be confined to British India only, or is it to be extended to the Indian States? If it is to be extended to the latter under what terms have they agreed to come in, for I assume you have got their agreement to this proposition? Are they to be dependent only on the Crown, or are they to be controlled by the new Government responsible only to the Indian Legislature instead of a Government responsible to the British Parliament? Will they accept that? Remember they are vitally concerned at every point, for whether in regard to fiscal arrangements, communications, or trade interests, our Legislature touches them closely. Some kind of Federation is the objective frequently held out to us; indeed it is the fact that some such Federation is necessary..... But have you secured that Federation yet, and on what terms will it be?"*

This is the first time that the idea of Federation was mooted officially in a serious debate which has had far-reaching effect.

Pundit Motilal Nehru who did not go into the question of Federation made the position of the Congress in regard to the future perfectly clear. He said:

"I may tell you at once that, so far as my party is concerned, it will take a Round Table Conference

*For fuller details see the Legislative Assembly Debates Vol. IV, Part 1, Official Report, 30th January to 18th February.

or Committee, or whatever other name you may give it, but the scope of that Committee or that Conference must not be limited. It must go into the whole matter. It must have the right to recommend whatever it considers proper. After all, it has no statutory power, it is not a thing which can bind all parties for all time to come. It can only make recommendations and upon those recommendations we ask the necessary steps to be taken to give them the sanction of law."*

As the demand of the Opposition for a Round Table Conference was opposed by the Government, the Left Wing of the Congress and the Nationalist parties

*Federation has since become the accepted policy of His Majesty's Government. Sir Samuel Hoare who was a member of the Joint Select Committee and also the most important witness before it on the eve of the publication of its report, while not anticipating its conclusions, traces in a topical article meant for American enlightenment, the developments which led up to it. He refers in that article to how some countries, particularly the United States, built up democratic institutions without adopting the principle of the responsibility of Ministers to the Legislature, while some countries abandoned it at least temporarily, but Britain continues to believe in it and Indians have learned to regard it as due to the natural course of their political evolution. We must be guided by the lessons of practical experience, he says, but in the developments that have hitherto occurred in India there is no sufficient ground for departing from a principle to which we were pledged by the Declaration of 1917.

Sir Samuel Hoare mentions certain considerations differentiating Indian from American and European constitutional problems, and says that it is universally accepted that an All-India Federation constitutes the only logical means of meeting requirements. He emphasizes the far-reaching repercussions of the step to be taken and says that the British people are fully conscious of their grave responsibilities and hope that their decision will be followed with sympathetic understanding in other countries, especially the United States.

desired to throw out the Budget Demands for Grants. There was a clash between them and the Right Wing men who on the contrary were anxious not to be branded as wreckers. 'If you could throw out one Demand for Grant, why not throw out the whole damn lot,' was the feeling of Mr. V. J. Patel, the Deputy Leader of the Swaraj Party. In that case, Pundit Motilal Nehru apprehended that he would not get the co-operation of other parties, not even of Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviya's Nationalist Party. 'We will show them up. The country is the judge,' persisted Mr. Patel and other Leftists. The Pundit was against isolating the Swarajists as intransigents. He aspired to establish contact with the Government instead of courting the position of a minority which they could ignore. At the same time, he wanted to take the parties with him so that he might speak for the Opposition as a whole.

A house divided against itself cannot stand. The Pundit wisely decided on a compromise between the Moderates who wanted to move 'token cuts' indicating how to save money and criticise the administration and the Congress people who definitely wanted the Governor-General to use his special powers under the Act to restore the rejected Grants. The Moderates thought this smacked of wrecking tactics, but Punditjee shrewdly explained that was far from his intention.*

*In moving his motion "that the demand under the head Customs be removed," the Pundit explained that it had nothing whatever to do with any grievance which may be connected with any particular branch of the Customs Department. 'My grievance,' said he, 'is not against this or that branch of administration but against the entire administration of the Government of India. I have selected Customs because it happens to be the first item on the list of demands.'—*Assembly Debates*, 10th March, 1924.

The Pundit secured the co-operation of the other parties in throwing out the first four of the Demands. The Pundit was able to defeat the Government, because of "the very unsatisfactory nature of the response," as he put it, "which has been made to the Resolution which this House passed by a large majority last month on the subject of the establishment of responsible Government in India."

The Pundit made it clear to his colleagues who were afraid of being misunderstood as playing the role of non-cooperationists that he was adopting a perfectly constitutional and legitimate means of bringing a very serious grievance to the notice of the Government, and when other remedies have failed, it is "the only course open to people who have outstanding grievances." He quoted from Taswell-Langmead's English Constitutional History, from the speech of Fox in the House of Commons on February 20, 1784 in his long continued controversy with Pitt, from a debate in the French Chamber of Deputies and used all his powers of persuasion to convince the Moderates who voted with him that he was not subtly dragging them into non-cooperation or obstruction. He assured them that his motion had "nothing whatever to do with what has been described as the wrecking or destructive policy of the non-cooperators."*

'I was speaking,' said Punditjee the next day replying to those who accused him of resorting to obstruction, 'as a member of the whole Nationalist party and not of that section only...of Swarajists...the step...was no part of what is called the wrecking policy.' (*Assembly Debates*, 11th March, 1924.)

*Legislative Assembly Debates, 10th March, 1924. For fuller details see Vol. IV part II, pages 1379 to 1422.

Punditjee did not want the abolition of the Customs Department but only to censure the Government of India

"In conclusion," said the Pundit, "I would appeal to the Honourable Members of this House to remember their vote on the demand itself, to remember that they have supported the demand which was put before the House on behalf of the people of India by a very large majority, and also to ask themselves if they think that the response given by the Secretary of State and by the Government of India is anything like a satisfactory response to a demand of that kind."

The Pundit thus took away the sting from his motion which would not otherwise have been passed, because other parties were as Punditjee himself admitted—and humorously not sarcastically alluded to in his speech—"nervous."

Lest it should alienate the Labour Government in England whom Punditjee expected to win over if possible, he said: "We mean nothing more by passing this Resolution, because, as I have said, it does not amount really to an actual refusal of supplies. We in this imitation Parliament are doing something in imitation of the real right of the people's representatives." (This sarcasm was necessary because the Leftists were grumbling that the Pundit was becoming too temperate and meek.) "This has only one result," continued Punditjee, "namely, to bring it to the notice of the Government that, so far as we are concerned, we have taken the strongest possible step open to us."

for not making the response they had expected of them to their constitutional demand. Sir Malcolm Hailey in his reply therefore said: "The Honourable Pundit has been perfectly frank on that subject.....he knows as well as we do that, if we withdrew the Customs establishment, there would be no chance of maintaining, much less of increasing, any of those protective duties which we are told are so necessary for the industries of India.

The Government, however, had no doubt that the Pundit could not stop there but would have to go further if his purpose was to embarrass them. "The matter cannot stop at voting down Customs," said Sir Malcolm Hailey, "if that is successful, then, to be consistent, he must vote down the whole of our Demands. He must go further: he must vote down our proposals for raising taxation. He must leave us entirely without fund, and without any means of incurring expenditure, in the hope that from the mass of those embarrassments and from the resulting general campaign of obstruction Government may be forced to remedy the grievances under which he and his friends, or, as he says, India suffers."

As for the inadequate response of the Government both here and in England, Sir Malcolm Hailey said that they, on their part, could not so force the pace of political progress as to advance ahead of such necessary adaptation of our machinery as is required to make each successive stage effective. "In fact our reply is based on one consideration only, not that the space should be retarded but that evolution should be orderly and harmonious throughout." After emphasising that the progress towards Responsible Government should be by progressive stages, Sir Malcolm stated the views of Lord Reading's Government about the demand for a Round Table Conference: "I have been told that we opposed it almost with bitterness. I myself am unconscious of any feeling of bitterness in the matter; certainly I resent any suggestion that we opposed it merely because we were not prepared to take into consultation men of different views from ourselves either within this Council or without it. That was not the case. We opposed it, because it explicitly proposed to substitute some other form of constitution for that 'evil thing'—the Govern-

ment of India Act. We opposed it, because it appeared to us to be supported on grounds which assumed that the British Parliament was not the arbiter of the progress to be made by India in constitutional advance; and finally because we believed that in itself it was an ineffective piece of machinery, lacking in all the elements necessary to command success."

The attitude of the Government was considered unreasonable even by reasonable members like the late Babu Bepin Chandra Pal who was then the greatest orator in the Assembly. He attacked both the Government and the Congress without mercy.* The Government listened patiently as he poured out a flood of words rebuking them for their folly of not having responded to the Assembly resolution by appointing a Royal Commission consisting of Englishmen and Indians. He was, he said, between the inexorable Treasury Benches and the Swarajist unknown. He decided to remain neutral. The Pundit's motion was carried by a majority of votes, the Government securing only 56 as against 63.

*"The Government has failed to give any response." said Mr. Pal. "They might have given, if not an assurance, at least some hope. I do not say that they could have done all that we wanted. Even Pundit Motilal knew that the Government could not give him the moon (*Pundit Motilal Nehru*: "I did not ask for it.") I know you did not. You are a very reasonable man. You gave the Government a blank card. They might write any names there. (*Pundit Motilal Nehru*: "Representatives to the satisfaction of this House. That was my prescription.") But that was in your mind, but not in your resolution. But the Government have done nothing.....We did not ask him (Secretary of State who was Lord Olivier then) to give us immediate Swaraj. But why could he not tell us, why could not the present Labour Government declare—"We cannot give everything you want.....we would send some sort of a Commission.....we will invite you to join that Commission?" (*Assembly Debates*, 10th March 1924.)

Mr. V. J. Patel moved without making a speech : " That the demand under the head ' Taxes on Income ' be omitted." Sir Basil Blackett taunted Pundit Motilal Nehru : " I was told, when I paid a visit to the United Provinces not very long ago, that there was a gentleman named Pundit Motilal Nehru who was very popular because he was going to bring Swaraj and Swaraj meant that nobody paid any taxes."

Mr. Bepin Chandra Pal who remained neutral warned the Pundit gently that these motions were rather taxing his patience. " I refrained from voting," said he in a short speech of two sentences, " on the last occasion because our friends the Swarajists wanted to enter a protest in regard to our demand for Constitutional advance. That has been done, and if they continue to try to omit every item in the Budget, it will be my clear duty to vote against them and with the Government."

The Swarajist supporters had dwindled. When Mr. Patel's motion was pressed to a division, the Ayes had 61 and Noes 60.

Mr. C. Duraiswami Aiyangar, a delightful speaker and a man of charming manners and sincerity, moved the next Demand for omission : " That the demand under the head ' Salt ' be wholly omitted." He confessed that it was futile to reject demands obviously because Government would restore them. Sir Basil Blackett would not mind certification and restoration becoming normal if obstruction were to become the fashion of the opposition. Therefore Mr. Duraiswami Aiyangar took the view of the cynical extremists : " Until this Assembly comes to a position of issuing commands to the executive in the name of the representatives of the people, I am perfectly certain that either the

wholesale rejection which I have moved or the nominal reduction which our members have tabled will be of no use."

The mover of this motion won some sympathy because the Salt Tax is, as Lord Olivier himself had stated, an odious form of taxation. He was then the Secretary of State for India. And I made some sensation by quoting, him during my speech on the general discussion of the Budget. I did not take part in obstruction this year, though I took a leading part in subsequent years. But on the Salt Tax I had set the ball rolling. The feeling on the Salt Tax ran really high. When the motion for the rejection of the grant was voted on, the Ayes had increased their strength and the Government supporters had decreased in number. Ayes were 62 and the Noes 53. In the course of my speech, I had stated: "As for the Salt Tax question I commend the words to the Hon'ble the Finance Member of none other than the Secretary of State for India. Lord Olivier in his latest statement has made a very powerful argument, not for the reduction of the Salt Tax, but for the relinquishment of it altogether. Lord Olivier states in his speech that he was reminded by the Viceregal certification of nothing less than the French Revolution." Here I quoted the Secretary of State for India at some length and his description of the Salt Tax as "a peculiarly iniquitous and horrible form of taxation." Three years after Lord Olivier who was no longer in office came to dine with me in Hotel Metropole but we did not discuss the question of Salt Tax. Nor did we anticipate at the time that Gandhi would march to the sea to make salt and thus proclaim to the world that sea water in India was taxed! My quotation from Lord Olivier gave the opportunity to the European group which did not like the Socialist Government to interfere. Sir Campbell

Rhodes—whom I met in London in the Railway Committee of which both of us were members in 1933—still remembers his Assembly days with pleasure. I did not remind him how as the leader of the European group he was rather embarrassed by the radicalism of a Socialist Secretary of State. Things were smooth then, because Sir Samuel Hoare, the Secretary of State for India, was a staunch Conservative. Sir Campbell Rhodes said in the Assembly that the position of the Secretary of State for India in regard to the Salt Tax had to be cleared. He rose immediately after me: "Sir, I shall not detain the House for more than two minutes," he began in a businesslike manner, as he was always businesslike,—the quality of successful businessmen,—as Chairman, in the absence of Sir Samuel Hoare, of the Railway Committee he displayed the same quality,—“My own object in intervening in this debate is to say that, as the last speaker pointed out, there appears to be a discrepancy between the utterances of the Secretary of State and the Honourable the Finance Member. In his recent speech in the House of Lords the Secretary of State seemed to identify himself, as Mr. Ranga Iyer pointed out, with those who according to him hold the Salt tax to be a peculiarly iniquitous and horrible form of taxation, and further seemed to suggest that he was reflecting on the action of His Excellency the Viceroy in certifying the Salt Tax last year.” Sir Campbell hastened to add that the Secretary of State “could never have intended the interpretation which his words appeared to Mr. Ranga Iyer and to others to bear.”

In proposing a two-rupee tax on salt last Friday, the Finance Member said: “I desire to make it clear to the House that this recommendation is made in full consultation with the Secretary of State and with his full approval and support. “The question I have to

ask, Sir,—and it is presumably one that will require to be answered not by the Honourable the Finance Member but by the Secretary of State—is as to how he justifies his present approval and support of what he simultaneously appears to designate as a peculiarly iniquitous and horrible form of taxation. I hope, Sir, that subject as the Treasury Benches are to attacks on the front, subject as they are to attacks on the flank, the Secretary of State will make it clear at the earliest possible moment that he is supporting the Government here in carrying out that policy to which he himself has apparently given his approval.”*

Mr. G. Pilcher (who later on became an M. P. but who was a prominent and eloquent member of the European group in the Assembly when he took part in the General discussion of the budget which was concluded the next day,) rubbed it into the Socialist Secretary of State as the European group had felt that they should have said things which could be used as a stick by the Opposition to beat the Government with especially when they had enough worries of their own. Mr. Pilcher said: “It does appear to me that Mr. Ranga Iyer was very near the mark yesterday in suggesting that the Finance Member finds himself on the horns of a dilemma as a result of the Secretary of State’s criticism of the Salt Tax as a peculiarly iniquitous and horrible form of taxation. It is impossible that the Finance Member who advocates a continuance of the Salt Tax.....and the Secretary of State who describes the Salt Tax as a peculiarly iniquitous and horrible form of taxation, can both be right. Mr. Pilcher spoke at some length. He was not not brief like his leader nor businesslike. He was, however very effective.”

*Assembly Debates. 5th March 1924.

The Finance Member had to defend the Secretary of State against the attacks of the European members. He was obviously explaining to the House of Lords, said Sir Basil Blackett, "the reasons for what he described as the general feeling of mistrust in India and among the reasons he mentioned the Salt Tax and certification."*

When Demand No. 4—Opium—came up, several honourable members, as if the laudanum of obstruction had gone to their heads, shouted: "Let us adjourn the House till tomorrow." The overburdened heart of the Moderates had probably given way! 'Opium' had not the political appeal of 'Salt tax.'

The President read out the Motion, when the impatience of a section of the House with the policy of the main Opposition was becoming audible. The official report records:

Several Honourable Members: I move the adjournment.

Mr. President: As many as are of that opinion will say, "Aye."

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. President. Order, order. The Honourable member ought to listen when I am putting it from the Chair. Those of the contrary opinion will say No! I think the Noes have it.

Mr. Devaki Prasad Sinha: The Ayes have it. Of course this stormy Swarajist was flippant for he was himself voting No.

The President, Sir Fredrick Whyte, became severe. The House was a pandemonium. He had to be stern because he had to control the House.

*See Assembly Debates of 6th March 1924.

Mr. President: Order, order. The Honourable Member ought to listen. I called 'order' several times.

Mr. Devaki Prasad Sinha: But we cannot hear.

Mr. President: Order, order. I warn the Honourable Member from Bihar and Orissa that he is very near the displeasure of the Chair.

Then the President whose voice now rose above the din of the House put the question. As the Assembly divided, Ayes had 57 and Noes 62.

Thus was the fight started in the first Assembly forcing the Viceroy to resort to his special powers for the restoration of grants which the House had rejected. The Congress party thus proclaimed to India that the Government had not the confidence of the Opposition. In less than four days they were censured four times by a majority. Under a responsible Government, the Opposition would have taken office and the Government would have become the Opposition or there would have been a General Election. As the Government were not removable, their unpopularity became as intense as their imperviousness became more and more visible. It was clear that a Government which a majority would dismiss could not retain the confidence of the public. The system stood exposed in all its naked autocracy. It had become a relic and a survival. It needed drastic overhauling. Even the officials, born and bred in a democratic country, began to feel and talk freely of the anomaly of a non-official majority in Parliament held in permanent opposition by a minority administration.

Some blamed the Montagu constitution for producing this amazing feature of an Opposition being in majority and Government being in minority. This, if curious, was the deliberate prelude of His Majesty's

Government, to introducing responsible Government not only in the Provinces but also the Centre. Mr. Jinnah thought that the time had come to introduce dyarchy in the Centre and autonomy in the Provinces.

Non-officials were not thinking of an All-India Federation which subsequently found support in the All Parties Conference Report in which the chapters relating to All-India Federation were written by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru.

Had Government immediately responded to the demand for a Royal Commission consisting of Indians and Europeans or a Round Table Conference, there would have been no revival on so vast a scale of Civil Disobedience. The lack of immediate response displeased the Moderates and Nationalists both in and outside the Assembly.

Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviya moved the rejection of the Finance Bill on 17th March 1924 in a speech which covers twenty two pages of the Assembly Debates (official report) and which lasted for some hours. Punditjee spoke without notes. Punditjee said :

“So long as the Government of India Act is not revised, I find that with my sense of self-respect, with the little conscience that God has given me, I cannot support taxation either now or in future. Take away the Government of India Act if you please. That is a threat which has oftentimes been uttered not by very responsible, thinking people, but take the Government of India Act away if you please. We shall not complain of it: but if you must govern India in the form of civilized Government, let reality be introduced in the place of the show that you have established here. (Hear, hear).”

Had the Government of India been wise, they should have immediately decided on a private Conference of the Opposition leaders who undoubtedly represented all that was sane and practical and also extreme and idealistic in India. Such a body of towering personalities is not likely to adorn the Opposition Benches of the Assembly for many years. They had authority to speak in the name of India. They could carry public opinion with them forcing the Extremists into the wilderness. If all of them could not be united, if the Congress was still an uncertain item in the official view, the Government could at least have followed Lord Morley's principle of rallying the Moderates. Pundit Malaviya was still a power to reckon with among the Hindus.

Instead of winning over Punditjee, they drove him and other Moderates of the Congress into the Extremist fold. Sir Malcolm Hailey who spoke the mind of Lord Reading, the Viceroy and his Government resisted the demand for a Round Table Conference though he understood that "the specific ground" of Pundit Malaviya was "that we would not agree to a Round Table Conference." Government would not even agree to a Royal Commission of Indians and Englishmen. Had Pundit Malaviya been invited to serve on a Royal Commission of a representative kind, he would have done so. Sir Malcolm relied more on his relentless rhetoric and less on the statesmanship which does not put off till tomorrow what you can do to-day.

"What does the Hon'ble Pundit,"* asked the Leader of the House, "and those whom he asks to support him propose to do today? He proposed to throw that

*Legislative Assembly Debates. Vol. IV, Part III, page 1944.

constitution back into the face of the British Parliament. And he thinks that by doing so, the day of responsible Government will be hastened. (*Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviya*: "Yes.") Then I pity his lack of political sagacity." Sir Malcolm Hailey was wrong and subsequent events have shown that Punditjee was right.

It was a pity that Government's policy of procrastination and bungling had depleted Punditjee and other representative Moderates of all their moderation when the Round Table Conference came. It came late—too late, but in life and politics one does not always get what one desires—and deserves—in time.

As there was not a single gesture from the Government to prevent Punditjee from pressing his motion to a division, in spite of the activity of the official whips, the Government were defeated by 60 to 67. For the first time in the history of the Assembly, the Finance Bill was thrown out.

Thus the 1924 session on constitutional grounds forced the Viceroy to carry on the administration through Certification and Restoration.

Lord Reading had planned out his policy with the ability of a diplomat. Sir Malcolm Hailey was going away to the Punjab. There "strong" rulers are necessary from a strategic point of view as Mr. Ramsay MacDonald has explained in one of his books.

Sir Malcolm Hailey's strength of language and unbending attitude had not caused bewilderment but the Opposition were pleased to have a change from the sour to the sweet. Had there been no Sir Malcolm Hailey before, the advent of his successor, a man all honey and sugar, Sir Alexander Muddiman, would have only made the Opposition more vigorous. The change from sour to sweet would have been mistaken as a fall from strength to weakness. Sir Alexander

Muddiman was a Reforms expert. And as lack of enthusiasm on the part of the Government to revise the Reforms Act was responsible for the Opposition's temper and tone, Lord Reading decided to appoint a committee of enquiry to tinker with the Reforms Act and see if there was any chance of advance before the Act was actually revised by a larger enquiry to be initiated later by His Majesty's Government. It was also part of Lord Reading's plan to associate willing Opposition leaders with this enquiry and save the Budget for the next year from the fate of certification and restoration which were distasteful to the Liberal statesman especially as they proved the triumph of their sworn opponent—the Congress.

Lord Reading decided to "Rally the Moderates" by appointing a Reforms Enquiry Committee. The Viceroy also decided that reasonable resolutions by the Opposition must be met in the Muddiman way and not in the Hailey way, though the Swarajists knew at the time that both Hailey and Muddiman were the obverse and reverse of the same coin. Mr. Mohammed Ali Jinnah decided to join the Muddiman Committee of enquiry and explore all avenues regarding the possibility of an advance.

In the meantime, Lord Reading himself was to go to England on leave and have a few talks with Lord Birkenhead, the Secretary of State for India, as to the best manner of approach of the Indian Constitutional problem.

Both Swarajists and Moderates were inclined to be friendly and adopt a kinder attitude not only towards each other but also the Government. Questions of social boycott which the Swarajists had adopted towards Viceregal receptions and official functions were discussed in the Party. Though there

was a sharp difference of opinion, the majority favoured the continuance of the ban. However, the boycott of official social functions was relaxed. As members of the Executive Council, it was argued, were colleagues of the Swarajists in the Assembly and the Council of State, it was but fit and proper to accept and return their social courtesies and convivialities. The opportunity for Pundit Motilal Nehru and Mr. Mohammed Ali Jinnah, both of them social birds, came.

If politics divided society united. When Sir Alexander Muddiman became the Home Member, himself a social bird, the birds of different feathers all flocked together.

The Swarajist leader and Mr. Jinnah gave a joint dinner to the Leader of the House in Western Hostel, New Delhi—now known as Western Court, an improvement in its name which is attributed to the genius of Lady Willingdon, the most charming Vicerene to whose taste and wonderful energy the late Edwin Montagu pays a handsome tribute in his Indian "Diary."

While socially fascinating, Sir Alexander was politically astute. It was no longer right to deny the important demands of the Opposition on such matters as the Indianization of the Army, a Military College for India on which the Moderates and Nationalists were keen. If the Government met them half-way, it was probably thought they could separate the sheep from the goats.

Accordingly when Mr. B. Venkatapathi Raju, a Moderate in politics though not a Justicite, moved a resolution for the establishment of a Military College in India, the Government, as the debate was becoming heated, announced their readiness for a compromise.

The resolution ran thus :

This Assembly recommends to the Governor-General in Council that early steps be taken for starting a well-equipped Military College in a suitable locality to train Indians for the commissioned ranks in the Indian Army Service and the necessary amount be sanctioned to start the preliminary work."

This resolution was amended by Diwan Bahadur T. Rangachariar who did not belong either to the Nationalist or Swaraj Party thus :

"That for the words in the original resolution 'and the necessary amount be sanctioned to start the preliminary work' the following be substituted :

And that for that purpose a committee including non-official Indians be immediately appointed for investigating and reporting upon a comprehensive scheme including the financial commitment involved therein."

Pandit Motilal Nehru supported the resolution truly observing that there could be no two opinions on it so far as the Indian public was concerned. Then he warmed into the subject and delivered a strong indictment on the Government's army policy : "you disarmed us," said he, "and then you did not afford sufficient opportunity for the young men of the country to train themselves for the army. Now that it is high time, it is said that there are difficulties in the way. But who has created those difficulties ? I have not the least hesitation in saying that they are all of your own making. If you had only begun in time, today it would have been possible, after hundred and fifty years, to man all the officers of the Indian army by Indians (*A voice:* "Then where would the British Empire go!") That is just the difficulty. But surely there are friends like my Honourable friend Pundit Madan Mohan

Malaviya who say that we will be proud to continue the present connection with England for all time to come. I am not of that opinion." Pundit Motilal immediately added lest Pundit Malaviya who did not like the snub should remind the former of the Oath of Allegiance which as a member of the Assembly he had taken—"not that I am against keeping up the connexion between England and India, but it should be on different terms to what obtains at present."

It was on the 19th of February 1925 that this discussion took place. The Budget was in sight. The Pundit had diplomatically imported idealism into the discussion to improve his chances of repeating last year's rejection of the demands for grants and the Finance Bill forcing the Government to carry on the administration by using the special powers of restoration and certification with which the Act had armed the Governor-General.

Sir Alexander Muddiman, however, after consulting the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Rawlinson, who was seated next to him, decided to meet the Opposition by moving the following amendment:

"That the following be substituted for the original resolution:

This Assembly recommends to the Governor-General in Council that a Committee including Indian members of the Legislature be immediately appointed to investigate and report—

- (a) Whether it is not practicable to establish a Military College in India to train Indian officers for the commissioned ranks of the Indian Army;
- (b) If so, how soon should the scheme be initiated and what steps should be taken to carry it out; and
- (c) Whether if a Military College is established in India, it should supersede or be supplemented by Sandhurst and Woolwich so far as the training of Indian officers is concerned.

The Swarajist Left was not in a mood to accept this *via media*.

As soon as Sir Alexander Muddiman had moved this amendment, I rose to address the House with some caution thus: "This amendment," said I, "unfortunately wants only a mere investigation and a report on '*whether it is practicable*'. I want something more practical. Further it does not specify how long the investigation is to take, when the report will be published and when and what number the committee is to consist of. I do not see why it should not specify the steps that should be taken for the establishment of a military college. I know the amendment contemplates an enquiry whether Sandhurst should be supplemented or superseded. I think, Sir, that this matter must enlist the most careful consideration of this House, for the Government appears to be prepared to depart from a position from which they have been so unwilling to depart, and when they are breaking new ground, when they are trying to solve a difficult problem, it may not be possible for us to get an amendment to our entire satisfaction. Therefore I want the House carefully to consider the matter and try to come to an understanding if it is really possible."*

The Sawarajist Leftists did not like my speech at all. They thought I was developing grey head on green shoulders! Mr. V. J. Patel rose to oppose the amendment strongly and wished the Leader of the House had not moved it. He produced a string of grievances and declared, pointing his finger of scorn to the Treasury Benches: "There is absolutely no reason why you should be annoyed when you are charged with want of *bona fides*."

*Assembly Debates of 19th February 1926. Volume V, Part II.

Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviya who was practical moved a further amendment deleting the words in the Home Member's amendment; "whether it is not practicable," to which I had already taken exception. The Pundit substituted in their place "what steps should be taken."

The Government would not accept further modification.

The President put the question: "That in the amendment as moved by the Home Member for the words 'whether it is not practicable,' the words 'what steps should be taken be substituted.' The Government objecting, the Assembly divided, Ayes having 59 and Noes only 37.

The Government later on decided to respond to the Opposition and appoint a military commission known as the Skeen Committee. Pundit Motilal Nehru who was offered a place on it, after consulting his party and securing their consent,—though Mr. Patel was not for co-operation then—agreed to accept the offer. He did not however complete his useful work. He withdrew from it reluctantly after having served on it for weeks as the Congress did not like his co-operation.

Thanks to the new Budget procedure which the separation of the Railway from General finance to which the Swarajist and other parties had agreed, had rendered possible,—Sir Charles Innes, the Member for Commerce and Railways, presented the Railway Budget with his great ability. During the second stage of the Railway Budget discussion, Pundit Motilal Nehru moved: "That the demand under the head Railway Board be omitted."

The one constitutional ground upon which the Pundit rested his case was that the Railway Board

was not responsible to the people and therefore they had the right to withhold supplies until that responsibility was established.

In his reply, Sir Charles Innes was satirical. He reminded the Honourable Pundit of two lines of a poem by Tennyson :

The sounds had little meaning
Though the words were strong.

The Independents who were ably led by Mr. Jinnah, the most brilliant debator in the House, had decided, in view of the changed attitude of the Government, as shown in the debate on the establishment of a Military College in India, not to follow the line of the Swarajists. I, therefore, appealed to them in my speech to join hands with us. The late Pundit Shamlal Nehru who was very good at interjections exclaimed: Why don't you appeal to the Government benches ?" To which I said in reply:

"My friend Pundit Shamlal Nehru, rather unwittingly says, 'why not appeal to the Government benches.' I would have appealed to the Government benches, had I not listened to the speech of the Commerce Member...I have yet to listen to the speech of Mr. Jinnah."

Mr. Jinnah rose immediately to state the position of his Party. The Swarajists repeatedly interrupted him. Mr. Jinnah's oratory thrives on interruptions. He said: "An appeal was made to me by the Honourable member there, Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer. I ask him this question. If we, with all the careful consideration that we have given to this question, have with regret to differ from him—it is with genuine regret to differ from him—and if we have come to this decision and if we are to leave our

party free to vote as they like, I ask shall we not be shirking our responsibility? Do you want us to stand here neutral ?

Pundit Motilal Nehru : No, follow your conscience.

Mr. M. A. Jinnah : We are following our conscience absolutely.

Pundit Motilal Nehru : Follow your own conscience not the Party conscience.

Mr. M. A. Jinnah : Why are you making it a party question yourself ?

Pundit Motilal Nehru : I offer to release my party from all obligations in the matter.

Mr. M. A. Jinnah : That is only when it suits Pundit Motilal Nehru."

Pundit Motilal Nehru reminded Mr. Jinnah of what they did last year to which Mr. Jinnah replied : "Supposing we thought we were wrong last time, are we going to commit the same mistake again ?"

When Pundit Motilal Nehru's amendment was pressed to a division, it was defeated 66 voting against and only 41 for. The Pundit was frankly unhappy. The cheers of the Treasury Benches showed how pleased they were with the result. Responsive co-operation had triumphed over monotonous obstruction. As the Government had responded to the people's demand that a Military College should be established in India, a section of the opposition thought that there was no justification for repeating the tactics of the previous year.

In the General Budget also the same fate overtook the Congress party. Pundit Motilal Nehru moved "that the Demand under the head 'Customs' be reduced by Rs. 79,300." The Pundit was not confining this time his arguments to politics. Mr. Kasthurbhai

Lalbhai, the Ahmedabad Mill owner, had moved a nearly identical amendment that the demand be reduced by Rs. 77,000 to bring to the fore the question of the abolition of the Cotton Excise Duty. Mr. Kasthurbhai Lalbhai was not a Congressman but a businessman. Under the head Cotton Excise Establishment, the list of demands had a total of Rs. 77,000. The Pundit added Rs. 2,300 to it under the head Cotton Excise Establishment for the Central Provinces. Thus adding the two he arrived at the figure Rs. 79,300 and pressed for the total abolition of this tax. The Pundit this time directed his attack on the cotton excise duty thus :

"It is a tax on production of one of the most essential necessities of life. But in spite of the deep and continued resentment of the people, in spite of the ceaseless war waged against it by the Indian National Congress in the Press and on the platform, in spite of the fact that Prime Ministers, Secretaries of State, Governors-General and even Finance Members have admitted the nefarious character of this impost, in spite of the fact, Sir, that this House very recently passed a Resolution condemning it, we find the Honourable the Finance Member absolutely unmoved."

Mr. Jinnah and Pundit Malaviya did not share Pundit Nehru's and the Swarajist enthusiasm to divide on this question after hearing the reply of Sir Basil Blackett who promised to consider the suggestion with the utmost care. Pundit Malaviya was for adjourning discussion till the next day whereas Mr. Patel and Pundit Nehru were both impatient. The House divided on Pundit Malaviya's motion that 'the Debate be now adjourned till Tuesday the 12th March.' The Government and the Opposition *minus* the Congress got 62 votes as against the Swarajists who secured 47*.

*For fuller details see official report of Assembly Debate of 6th March 1925. (Vol. V, Part II of 1925.)

When the debate on 'Taxes on Income' began, after lunch on 7th March, the benches were empty and there was no quorum. When Mr. T. C. Goswami, who uttered shocking things in charming language, drew the attention of the Chair to this, the Deputy President said there was a quorum. On counting the number of members present, the Swarajists found there was no quorum. When one of them called the Chair's attention, the Deputy President in the chair said, "Yes, see the quorum in the lobby." Whereupon I rose to a point of order :

"Is it reasonable to continue the proceedings of the House when there is no quorum? It does not matter whether the quorum is in the lobby or not. With due respect to you, Sir, is it proper or legal to continue the proceedings of the House when there is no quorum?"

Whereupon, the official report records: "The bell rang to obtain the necessary quorum," after which the Speaker who was in possession of the floor of the House resumed his speech.

It was apparent the Swarajists had lost all interest finding themselves in a minority in the House and preferred to keeping a quorum in the lobby instead of the House. One way, they thought, of killing the debate was by driving the quorum to the lobby. Had the officials retaliated, the Swarajist indifference to non-official days would have resulted in the Opposition losing the opportunity for debate on non-official resolutions because it was the Government who kept the quorum.

A motion of a non-Swarajist which was a token cut of Rs. 100—last year it was a wholesale cut—was carried with Swarajist help by 56 to 39. Such cuts have been carried in the pre-Swarajist era also.

It was significant that with the responsive policy of the Government other parties had become responsible. The sense of responsibility has a knack of becoming contagious.

When Demand No. 19 under 'Opium' was taken up, one of the Swarajists had given notice of a wholesale cut and a nominated member, a token cut of Rs. 100 reduction. The Swarajist leader found that his party would be in a minority. Instead of courting defeat on the omission of the Grant, he excused himself by saying that he had advised that the total rejection of the demand should not be moved "because, in any event, we must provide at least for the cultivation and manufacture of opium for medicinal and scientific purposes." The Pundit was discreet. And the token cut was carried by 62 votes to 50.

If Pundit Motilal Nehru was for "discretion," Mr. V. J. Patel was for "valour." The latter's policy was that while courting defeat over their own party motions leaving it to the country to judge, the Swarajists should support the anti-Government motions of the Moderates thus inflicting a defeat on the Government. Mr. Patel found many sympathisers. His purpose was to defeat the Government on Moderates' motions and gain a moral victory over the Moderates in the eye of the public who would know why the Swarajists could not throw out the Grants.

Mr. Jamnadas Mehta, who was then a right-hand man of Mr. Patel, moved the omission of the demand under the head 'Interest on Ordinary Debt and Reduction or Avoidance of Debt.' The purpose of the Swarajists was not to repudiate the debts but to get a Committee appointed "with a majority of elected members of this House to go into the whole question of the allocation between revenue and expenditure,"

as Mr. Patel said, "and also the question as to what items should be votable and what non-votable." The motion of Mr. Jamnadas was negatived. Another motion of Mr. Patel was lost on the same subject 43 voting for and 47 against.

Though the voting was close, the Swarajist Right were beginning to feel the humiliation of defeat: "What was the use," said they, "of continuing in an Assembly in which they could not inflict defeat after defeat on the Government?" The Left held that defeat or victory was the same as it made no real difference to an irremovable Government.

The Swarajists who were angry opposed even the consideration of the Finance Bill. Their anger increased when the motion for the consideration of the Bill was carried by 76 votes to 40.

The Swarajists were losing heavily. They had rejected the Finance Bill last year. This year they were defeated by a majority which had thirty members more on the Government side than before at the consideration stage. When they divided the House on the third reading of the Finance Bill, the Bill was passed by 68 to 50.

Defeat led to a spirit of defeatism. Already whispers were audible in the Congress circles outside as to why the Swarajists should continue to be in the Legislatures.

An attempt was made to rally the Moderates on a resolution next year (20th January 1926) on the release of political prisoners without trial and the return of the exiles. Maulvi Mohammad Shafee, in whose name the resolution was balloted and who was a Swarajist then, moved it. Mr. T. C. Goswami moved an amendment to the original resolution. The reso-

lution was lost. The more moderate amendment, however, was carried 53 voting for 45 against.

By the way, there is nothing new in the 1935 Congress but of fighting the dual policy of the Government: Reforms and Repression! The present Congressmen are only repeating the programme of their predecessors who having got tired of planting boiled potatoes on the floor of the House decided to walk out. Some of them would gladly stay on, but the Congress outside was getting impatient of the battle of wits and words.

Lest the Swarajists should walk out, the Nationalist leader decided to join them when they embarked on a renewed struggle—when the Railway Budget came up for discussion. They moved the omission of the demand under the head 'Railway Board' and attacked its policy severely. The main issue was the non-inclusion of even a single Indian on the Railway Board.

The Assembly divided: the Swarajist motion was carried by 51 to 48 votes.

The defeat of the Government was due to their unsatisfactory response to the constitutional resolution about a Round Table Conference. Lord Reading, the Viceroy, had gone on leave to England to meet Lord Birkenhead, the then Secretary of State for India. This was the first time that the Viceroys were permitted to take leave. Both Lords Reading and Birkenhead were great lawyers. Mutual admiration enhanced their mutual anxiety to discuss the failure of India and proceed on right lines.

The result of the Birkenhead-Reading conversations was reported to India by the Viceroy in his address to the Assembly on August 20, 1925. A discussion

had already taken place in the Simla session same year on the Reforms Enquiry Committee Report of which the Home Member was the Chairman. The Opposition had in that resolution repeated their demand for a Round Table Conference and expressed their dissatisfaction with the Muddiman Committee Report. They had also formulated in their resolution the minimum demand of the Indian people which fell much short of Dominion Home Rule.*

*This Assembly while confirming and reiterating the demand contained in the Resolution passed by it on the 18th February 1924 recommends to the Governor-General in Council that he be pleased to take immediate steps to move His Majesty's Government to make a declaration in Parliament embodying the following fundamental changes in the present constitutional machinery and administration of India:

(a) The revenues of India and all property vested in or arising or accruing from property or rights vested in His Majesty under the Government of India Act, 1858, or the present Act or received by the Secretary of State in Council for the purposes of the Government of India shall hereafter vest in the Governor-General in Council for the purposes of the Government of India.

(b) The Governor-General in Council shall be responsible to the Indian Legislature and subject to such responsibility shall have the power to control the expenditure of the revenues of India and make such grants and appropriations of any part of those revenues or of any other property as is at present under the control or disposal of the Secretary of State for India in Council, save and except the following which shall for a fixed term of years remain under the control of the Secretary of State for India:

(i) Expenditure on the Military Services up to a fixed point.

(ii) Expenditure classed as Political and Foreign.

(iii) The payment of all debts and liabilities hitherto lawfully contracted and incurred by the Secretary of State for India in Council on account of the Government of India.

It was clear that the Opposition was in a reasonable frame of mind. The Congress itself was in a mood to measure its strength against the Government by the weakest link in the chain, namely Mr. Jinnah, who was a member of the Muddiman Committee.

(c) The Council of the Secretary of State for India shall be abolished and the position and functions of the Secretary of State for India shall be assimilated to those of the Secretary of State for the Self-governing Dominions save as otherwise provided in clause (b).

(d) The Indian Army shall be nationalized within a reasonably short and definite period of time and Indians shall be admitted for service in all arms of defence and for that purpose, the Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief shall be assisted by a Minister responsible to the Assembly.

(e) The Central and Provincial Legislatures shall consist entirely of members elected by constituencies formed on as wide a franchise as possible.

(f) The principle of responsibility to the Legislature shall be introduced in all branches of the administration subject to transitional reservations and residuary powers in the Governor-General in respect of the control of Military, Foreign and Political affairs for a fixed term of years:

Provided that during the said fixed term the proposals of the Governor-General in Council for the appropriation of any revenue or moneys for Military or other expenditure classified as "Defence" shall be submitted to the vote of the Legislature. But that the Governor-General in Council shall have however, notwithstanding the vote of the Assembly, to appropriate up to a fixed maximum any sum he may consider necessary for such expenditure and in the event of a war to authorize such expenditure as may be considered necessary exceeding the maximum so fixed.

(g) The present system of dyarchy in the Provinces shall be abolished and replaced by unitary and autonomous responsible Governments subject to the general control and residuary powers of the Central Government in inter-provincial and all-India matters.

Lord Reading had told the Assembly on 20th January 1925 that the constitutional issues referred to by the Reforms Enquiry Committee were under the consideration of himself and his Government. He pleaded in a persuasive way that the weighty nature of the problems and of the investigation by the Committee demanded their most careful attention and study and we thought it right to avoid observations upon any of the various questions involved until there had been adequate opportunity for thorough examination and deliberation by him and his Government. The Viceroy did not have any reason in 1926 not to convey to the Assembly a message of hope. He and his Government had not only an opportunity of discussion but he had also had the privilege when on leave to discuss the situation with Lord Birkenhead, the Secretary of State for India.

(h) The Indian Legislature shall after the expiry of the fixed term of years referred to in clauses (b) and (f) have full powers to make such amendments in the constitution of India from time to time as may appear to it necessary or desirable.

This Assembly further recommends to the Governor-General in Council that necessary steps be taken—

(a) To constitute in consultation with the Legislative Assembly a convention, Round Table Conference or other agency adequately representative of all Indian, European and Anglo-Indian interests to frame with due regard to the interests of minorities a detailed scheme based on the above principles after making such inquiry as may be necessary in this behalf;

(b) To place the said scheme for approval before the Legislative Assembly and submit the same to the British Parliament to be embodied in a statute."

(This was adopted by the Assembly by 72 votes to 45).

(See official report of Legislative Assembly Debates, 8th February, 1925).

In his address to the Legislative Assembly on August 20, 1925, instead of announcing a Round Table Conference or a Commission consisting of Indian and British leaders, Lord Reading repeated the challenge of Lord Birkenhead to Indians to produce a constitution of their own. This was bad tactics especially when the leaders of the Assembly had formulated their demands and the Congress itself had lowered the flag. To ask the leaders to go to the country and frame a constitution of their own instead of inviting them to England was a mistake which two able Englishmen like Lord Birkenhead and Lord Reading should not have committed.*

If Indians were to respond to their invitation and succeed in the attempt, how could the Governments both in India and England reject that constitution? Pundit Motilal Nehru was determined therefore to summon an All Parties Conference—though the Congress Left Wing said the challenge was a trap and warned the Pundit against walking into it. The Pundit, however, accepted the challenge.

Henceforward the Pundit began to think less of the Assembly and more of the country outside. For the success of an All Parties Conference, propaganda outside was necessary. Propaganda increases the idealism and hopes and aspirations of the people.

*"In a notable passage in his speech," said Lord Reading in his speech from the Throne, which the Opposition took as the repetition of a challenge which it could no longer ignore, "Lord Birkenhead disclaimed on behalf of the British Parliament any monopoly in the art of framing constitutions and he invited Indians, to contribute, if they could do so, their own solution. He invited them—to judge his words—to produce a constitution which carries behind it a fair measure of general agreement among the great peoples of India." H. E. the Viceroy's speech to the Assembly on 20th August 1923. (See official report, Vol. VI Part I, p. 13.)

After the All Parties Conference had reported, the proper thing for the Government to do was to send for the leaders who produced their report and the dissentients whom it did not satisfy for a Conference in London. Instead of that, His Majesty's Government sent out the Simon Commission to India taking every care to leave Indians out of it.

This staggered the Moderates who boycotted the Commission. The Extremists were grateful to the Government for having united the forces of Indian Nationalism.

The Swarajists had walked out of the Assembly preferring Direct Action to Parliamentary Action.

Lord Reading had an opportunity of reconciling the Congress to the British Empire. He was, however, out to try conclusions with it. He could not probably forgive its boycott of the visit of the Prince of Wales—and his failure to have it called off by the offer of a Round Table Conference.

Had the Congress been wise, it would have called off boycott wherever the Prince visited and resumed it the moment His Royal Highness left the place, thus showing that its quarrel was not with the Royal House of Windsor, as its goal was still Dominion Status. Thus not only the philosophy of Mahatma's non-violence would have been demonstrated to England and the world and his earnestness, to come to terms with His Majesty's Government, proved, but also the case for an early Round Table Conference and settlement with Gandhi would have become impregnable and irresistible. His Royal Highness himself would have become the advocate of the National cause. The Mahatma blundered into boycott. The late C. R. Das was for accepting Lord Reading's offer of a Round Table Conference.

As for Lord Reading, he should not have been so irresponsible as to expose the Prince, our future Emperor, to a situation which was deplorable. When India was ablaze with Civil Disobedience, one wondered how an administrator so experienced as Lord Reading could have perpetrated the serious blunder of inviting His Royal Highness. The public opinion was that Lord Reading was using the Prince as a pawn in the Viceregal game of advertising India's loyalty to the world. The proper way to proclaim that loyalty was to put off the visit of His Royal Highness until the Viceroy had either come to terms with the Congress even temporarily as Lord Irwin did or put it down as Lord Willingdon has done.

No one knew that he had blundered as Lord Reading did. He severely punished the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi for the boycott by a campaign of arrests and imprisonments. Any British Government or Indian Government which believes in British connexion would put down a disloyal boycott directed against the Royal House of Windsor. The boycotters revelled in their explanation of loyalty which, they made clear as Gandhi did in *Young India*, was not directed against the Prince personally whom India loved but against the Viceregal policy of bringing His Royal Highness to India to beat down their movement. My own view at the time was that the Mahatma could have proved his words by a temporary suspension of the movement.

Lord Reading was an embittered Viceroy. He could never recover from the blow. He knew though never confessed publicly that he was guilty of a gross error of judgment in inviting the Prince of Wales before India had settled down. He could not forget his blunder nor forgive the Congress its. He was

incapable of approaching the Indian problem without bias. He presumably advised Lord Birkenhead to leave Indians out of the Royal Commission.

When Lord Irwin succeeded Lord Reading, public feeling was suffering from the agony of repression which found expression in the Swarajist attitude in the Assembly. Obstruction by the Swarajists became so boisterous that it climaxed in preventing the Finance Member from replying to the debate on the Finance Bill. They hissed and hooted and thumped the tables preventing the Finance Member from proceeding with his speech.

Obstruction became infectious. Following the precedent of Speakers of British Parliament who in the times of Kings Charles and Cromwell, had openly taken the side of radicals and revolutionists, President Patel joined the Opposition and exclaimed that he would refuse to permit the Government to make the Assembly an instrument of repression. Whatever the judicial historian may say, no one can deny that President Patel was impressing the country with his daring patriotism. India was to him greater than the Chair and the pursuit of her freedom more important. A tiny little book called the Assembly Manual could not repress that warm-hearted and high-spirited patriot from serving the Motherland in that great commotion.

The Chair had overshadowed the Opposition.

CHAPTER XXXIII

ONE BLUNDER AFTER ANOTHER

"We of the East cannot borrow the Western mind or the Western temperament."—DR. RABINDRANATH TAGORE:—(Address to youths in Gokhale Hall, Madras, on November 2, 1934).

"We Indians know that it is through the intermixture of Indian and English cultures and ideas that the salvation of India will come."—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA (*Prabuddha Bharata* for November 1934 recalling C. C. Everett's interview with the Swami in America).

The Swarajist policy to enter the Legislature with a view to fight the national battles after the fashion of Parnell in Parliament was practised in the Bengal Council by the late Deshabandhu C. R. Das whose achievement on his passing away in the midday splendour of his fame was a *gazette* notification officially announcing the suspension of dyarchy. That obstructive policy in the Centre had conflicting results, though its undoubted repercussions out in the country ended in the revolutionary climax with the appearance of Bhagat Singh and his co-workers in the Assembly gallery to annihilate with bomb and pistol what the wordy obstructionists had failed to accomplish. The outburst of violent attacks, succeeded in creating a spirit of violence. Mahatma Gandhi who has retired from the Congress admits the advent of violence

which he is not able to curb. The Swarajists were not votaries of non-violence on religious grounds. The late Pundit Motilal Nehru approved of non-violence because it was expedient to do so. Babu Purshottam Das Tandon, the associate of Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru in the United Provinces, who led the Socialist left-wingers at the last Congress, was opposed to making a fetish of non-violence. The late Sir Surendranath Bannerjee used to say that violence and terrorism were evils of the West—"noxious growths—transplanted to the East whose soil was uncongenial for their growth. Indian history reeks with violence as the history of other nations. The nations of the world have been prowling through the jungles of violence and war. In India it was customary—before Thuggee was extirpated—for individuals to spring at each other's throats, tearing and rending them. Destruction, devastation, slaughter—these have possessed East as well as West. Materialism has not been the monopoly of the West nor spirituality of the East. The Eastern and Western minds have been essentially the same. Christ copied the East for the West. Britain has brought the West to the East.

The educated Indian who is a child of British rule is also an imitator of British methods, a student of British history. He knows how hard were the knocks which Britain encouraged its Irish opponents to deliver at her in what was essentially a domestic quarrel in the Imperial family. When Deshabhandu C. R. Das advocated Council-entry, he was following the method of Parnell and his Irish colleagues in the House of Commons which English Liberals seemed to like. The clean constitutional obstruction which the late C. R. Das advocated was appreciated by his opponents as evidenced by the messages of sympathy that Mrs. Das received from the highest authorities of the land and the tributes

which appeared in the British Press in India and England. He died triumphantly killing dyarchy in Bengal with the sword of obstruction. Today under the new constitution dyarchy has no place. Sir James Crerar in a thoughtful speech in England advocated the abolition of dyarchy and thus answered those who would still keep Law and Order as a reserved subject making provincial autonomy "a ridiculous mouse" as Lord Reading said in Parliament on December 18.

The testimony of Sir James Crerar is valuable for two reasons. In the first place, during the Home Secretaryship of this scholar, a remarkable combination of shyness and outspokenness—though he spoke so little—valuable knowledge was collected and published about the working of dyarchy. In the second place, he was misrepresented—owing to his opposition to Lord Irwin's infatuation for the Mahatma by whom his lordship did not ultimately stand to the disappointment of the Congress—as being anti-Indian, opposed to reforms including provincial autonomy. It is interesting therefore that an experienced and cautious administrator like Sir James Crerar should have openly after his retirement—contrary to the habit of a class of ex-officials who speak against the interests of the country whose salt they have eaten and still continue to eat—put the weight of his authority and experience into the scale of Indian reforms. Sir James Crerar believes that "the transfer of Law and Order is indispensable to provincial autonomy"*

*Quoted in a booklet *India from a Back Bench* by five Conservative M. Ps.—Sir Adrian Baillie, Captain Victor Cazelet, the Marquess of Dufferin and Ava, Wing Commander A. W. H. James and Mr. Mark Patrick.

The authors opine that the unexpected success of the Congress boycott showed the difficulty of forcing goods on unwilling buyers, while India's acceptance of the Ottawa

So far as the Provinces are concerned, with provincial autonomy working, pedestrian policies will serve no purpose except to turn the wrath of the electors on those who got their votes for bringing them administrative good. The policy, however, of securing increased rights, through deadlocks may yet persist if opinions clash and insoluble difficulties arise from such a clash between the Governor and the responsible Government. While constitutionalists would aspire to reduce the clashes, the intransigents and obstructionists might like to produce them.

In the Centre, where responsibility might be as illusory, or for the Congress as elusive as an *ignis fatuus*, for many a long day its representatives might repeat the methods—if not from the Chair from the floor of the House—of their late lamented leaders Pundit Motilal Nehru, and Mr. Vithalbhai Patel. A study of their methods and aims, arguments and opposition will be useful, especially when Congressmen have, so far as the Hindus are concerned, swept the polls and will occupy the position, if they do not walk out, which the old Swaraj party did in the Legislative Assembly under the leadership of Pundit Motilal Nehru and Mr. S. Srinivasa Ayengar, the President of the Gauhati Congress and the boldest thinker of the Swaraj party henceforward known as “the Congress Party” with the advent of the Congress President to the Assembly after the 1926 elections when he annihilated the Justice Party.

Pundit Motilal Nehru was assisting Sir John Simon in England in a case before the Privy Council which Sir John won. The Pundit and I had a casual

Agreement and the Lees-Mody Textile Pact last autumn show that goodwill and not coercion was the surest basis for friendly Indo-British trade reciprocity.

talk about the Congress in the Empire Parliamentary Association rooms. The Pundit was dressed in black coat and striped trousers. His son wore a lounge suit. His father had just returned my book *Father India* which he had borrowed from Sir Howard D'Egville, the charming Secretary of the Empire Parliamentary Association, to whom I had presented a copy. It had just gone into its fourth edition—before the end of the year it went into thirteen editions, *i. e.* as many as *Mother India* to which it was a reply. I called Pundit Jawaharlal's attention to a review of it in the *Daily Telegraph* (which was lying on the Association, table) which had described it as "furious polemics."

I told the Pundit how I had put the emphasis on India's loyalty to British connexion while I was refuting the political part of Miss Mayo's story. His famous son was then thinking of independence. He had a resolution in mind for the forth-coming Madras Congress which I attended, as a visitor, though old friends dragged me to the dais where the leaders sat. The Pundit told me, "I ride two horses"—Independence and Dominion Status. He sat between two stools.

Or arriving in Madras, I found that Mr. Srinivasa Ayengar was for Sovereign Independence and no conversations with England except at a Round Table Conference—not of a kind that was staged but a practical and businesslike one which Mr. DeValera got. He therefore stood behind Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru. Mr. Srinivasa Ayengar was the idol of young India then, the life and soul of the Madras Congress, which gave the Congress ideal a new turn. It was useless for me to resist the tide though I argued with Mr. Srinivasa Ayengar—always tolerant to the other side, willing to listen—that the independence ideal would have to be enforced by an independence programme

which would meet with official resistance. He knew it. He was if inevitable prepared for it. But he would not court it needlessly. Had Pundit Motilal Nehru not quarrelled with Mr. Srinivasa Ayengar, he and not Mr. Desai would be today the leader of the Opposition in the Assembly. Both have been, by the way, ex-Advocate Generals in their respective Presidencies.

The people of India were cruelly disappointed when Indians were excluded from the Simon Commission. Sir John Simon invited the Assembly to set up a Committee to be associated with the Parliamentary Commission. I advocated at a joint meeting of the Swarajist, Nationalist and Independent parties capturing this Committee, sending proper witnesses and making an unassailable case for Dominion Status. I argued that the Central Legislative Committee, working as a parallel Commission, could resolve itself into a Round Table Conference when the Simon Commission had reported and settle the problem once for all. Contrast, I said, the indifference with which the public would treat the Commission and the deference they would show to the Legislative Committee taking its leaders in processions wherever they went impressing His Majesty's representatives of their undoubted hold on the people. Englishmen respected leaders with public opinion behind them. The demonstration of their strength could not be achieved even if they were to spend a crore of rupees on foreign propaganda. Moreover they could claim perfect equality of status and enforce that claim as both the Legislature and the country to which they could appeal when the occasion arrived were with them.

Neither Mr. S. Srinivasa Ayengar who, in the absence of Pundit Motilal Nehru in London, was the

leader of the Swaraj Party nor Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviya nor Mr. Jayakar nor Mr. Jinnah could see eye to eye with me. The Legislative Assembly boycotted the Simon Commission. The Council of State offered co-operation. The Assembly members were nominated by the Government.

The Assembly repudiated the Simon Commission as a dodge of Lord Birkenhead as all Royal Commissions were merely to get over a temporary difficulty caused by a complicated situation and not with a view to evolve a vast and growing machine of self-government for one-fifth of the human race. In vain did Sir John appeal to the Assembly that he had come earnestly to tackle a problem which had been repeatedly before the Governments of India and England.

Lala Lajpat Rai who moved the resolution* on behalf of the Opposition made a stirring speech in which, after presenting the people's case, he made a touching appeal to the Muslims to co-operate with the Hindus. The Lion of the Punjab gave the reasons that had made them roar out their protest so that the British lion might respond in a sympathetic roar announcing a representative Round Table Conference. He said with perfect frankness: "My first reason is that I have no faith in the *bona fides* of the Government or of the people who have appointed this Commission." His second reason, he stated, was that

*See official report of the Debates of the Assembly of 18th February 1928. The resolution which was moved by the Nationalist Party leader, Lala Lajpat Rai, ran thus: "This Assembly recommends to the Governor-General in Council to inform His Majesty's Government that the present constitution and scheme of the Statutory Commission are wholly unacceptable to this House and that this House will therefore have nothing to do with this Commission at any stage and in any form."

he had no faith in the competency of the Commission that had been appointed. He acknowledged that Sir John Simon was "one of the ablest members of the British nation" and so were his colleagues "well-intentioned" but even if the gods were to descend from the heavens, they could not master the Indian problem in so short a time as was at the disposal of the Commission. Lala Lajpat Rai made no secret of his impression of what the Commission would achieve of which he gave a sarcastic forecast :

"My impression is that all that the Commission will do will be practically recording in a gramophone what they will be told by the bureaucracy here and eventually they will be recording in another gramophone their recommendations in consultation with some other people in England."

Sir John Simon was far from a gramophone of the Government which had at its head Lord Irwin. Sir John did not like the Irwin declaration of Dominion Status as I knew in England at the time. He did not like a Round Table Conference of Princes and people for a Pan-Indian Federation which was beyond the scope of his Commission, though to save his and the Commission's face, in view of the Viceregal declaration, he had to address a letter to the Prime Minister cautiously approving it. I saw how he broke down in the House of Commons debate on the Dominion Status declaration and a glass of water had to be brought at once when he recovered his form and voice. A friend of mine in the Socialist Cabinet to whom I spoke of this later said that Sir John was so tired, he was working so hard, he was exhausted. "Exasperated," I told him would be nearer the truth. The British newspapers, Liberal and Tory alike, made no secret of the differences between Sir John Simon and the

Socialist Government, actively assisted by the Conservative Viceroy. The Socialists had not appointed the Commission. Their predecessor, the Conservative Government, had sent out this Commission to India. The decision to exclude Indians had emerged from the discussion of two Imperialists like Lords Reading and Birkenhead.

There was nothing to prevent Lord Irwin when he came to India and saw men and things to inform His Majesty's Government that the plan of an All-White Commission was out-of-date. It would have no better effect in India than waving a red flag before an angry bull. John Bull would have understood the situation. Also the late Lord Birkenhead who had a real hand in settling the Irish problem. As he put his signature to the Anglo-Irish Agreement, Lord Birkenhead was reported as having said to Michael Collins: "I have signed my political death-warrant." Michael Collins who signed the document said that he had signed his actual death-warrant. Subsequently Michael Collins, the Captain-General of the Irish Sinn Fein, was shot. None knew the Irish problem better than Lord Birkenhead. Did Lord Irwin warn Lord Birkenhead of the serious consequences that would follow the insult to India—whether it was meant or not—as she would interpret it, if Indians were excluded from the Royal Commission? Did he advise the Secretary of State that the immediate summoning of a Round Table Conference would take the wind from the sails of the Extremists both in and outside the Congress? Did he realize himself the seriousness that a Viceregal omission to warn his boss would lead to? "A stitch in time saves nine" is more true in political crises than perhaps the inexperienced Viceroy knew at the time. Lord Irwin was new. He had to reap where Lord Reading had grown.

There were two Lord Irwins, one of the Chelmsford Club speech in which he spoke as Sir Surendranath Bannerjea before a Congress audience—Lord Irwin the Christian idealist, and Lord Irwin the administrator and diplomat. It was the same Lord Irwin who permitted Gandhi to take his food in the Viceroy's House in the same dish in which he used to feed in his prison cell. There was another Lord Irwin who issued more ordinances than perhaps the Czar of Russia had issued ukases. Was Lord Irwin awaiting the departure of Lord Birkenhead from the India Office and the fall of the Conservative Government to assert himself? The Viceregal assertion took place when the Simon Commission was nearing the end of their labours but had not completed them. Had they been given a few more months, they would have finished their work and the frenzy of opposition which broke out in England could have been prevented. When Lord Birkenhead died, Mr. Churchill stepped in to keep the anti-Indian agitation going. There was a feeling that the Socialists were stampeding the Commission into a surrender.

The worst passions were roused by Lord Irwin's "precipitate action" as the diehards howled. Having roused them, he should not have surrendered to them, arrested Mr. Gandhi and Pandit Motilal Nehru, and showered on the devoted heads of a people inspired by his own repudiation of the Simon Commission, ordinance after ordinance. Lord Irwin's policy had all the defect of drift.

If Lord Irwin was the sport of the wind and the wave, the Congress also drifted rudderless. The time to declare Independence and Civil disobedience had not yet arrived. When the Viceroy gave the pledge of Dominion Status, the Congress leaders should

not have mistaken conciliation as collapse. They should not have ignored the might of Britain. If words were soldiers, the orators could have banished the British raj beyond what the Sanatanists call the "black waters." They should have accepted Lord Irwin's offer of a Round Table Conference and tried to dominate it. It was a golden opportunity which they deliberately lost. They wanted to dictate to His Majesty's Government from here that the latter should make Indian Home Rule their battle-cry if the Tories would not let them pass the Home Rule Bill through Parliament. A demand like that would have had some value if the Tories had joined Mr. Churchill and repudiated the Round Table Conference scheme. They should have accepted the Socialist offer first. The Socialists were prepared to go very fast. I knew it personally in England. But they would not let a Congress party decide on what issue they should dissolve the Government.

The proper thing for the Congress was to go to England and press their points home and help the pro-Indian Socialist Government by carrying on a powerful campaign in England. In this, unfortunately, the Congress had no faith. If they had no faith, they should not have entered the Legislatures. It was to impress Britain that they approved of the Council-entry programme. Having entered the Legislature, they should not have left it in a huff with their work half-done or undone.

Mrs. Brijlal Nehru in whose house in New Delhi Pandit Motilal Nehru sometimes stayed during the Assembly session gave her impression in the *Tribune* of 9th November 1934 of the futility of propaganda in England and of Council-entry :—

"My experience of the effect of Indian propaganda in England has been very disappointing and as a

result of that experience I have come to the conclusion that it is wrong to determine on any course of action solely, or even chiefly, on the ground that 'it will have a good effect in England.'

Ever since the journal *India*, which was supposed to be the official organ of the Congress, ceased publication in London, no organised and well-financed efforts have been made on behalf of any political party in India to present Indian opinion or Indian conditions to the English public."

The last editor of *India* was that brilliant writer and speaker Mr. Syed Hossain of the *Independent* fame. When the motion for the abolition of *India* came before the Subjects Committee, I strongly opposed it as a mistake. So long as the goal of India was Dominion Status—as it was at the time—there was no meaning in abandoning propaganda in England. I do not believe in impressing world opinion, but we cannot afford to ignore the British public. I have addressed several meetings in England. One of the stormy meetings which I addressed was with Mr. George Lansbury. I was asked to speak all at once by the Socialist leader. It was in 1927. I had no idea when Mr. Lansbury took me to the meeting that I would be asked to speak. The cheers with which my speech was received and Mr. Lansbury's when he commented on mine convinced me more than ever what a folly it was on our part to give up propaganda in England. Mr. Lansbury said to the great audience: You have seen the representative of a great nation who at a moment's notice, in a foreign language, presented (I omit the kind adjectives) his people's case. How many of you could have presented your own case in your own language *impromptu*, he asked? And yet these are the people who we say have not the

intelligence to manage their affairs! This Grand Old Man speaking of India spoke in a style and manner which would have heartened the late Lala Lajpat Rai and Mahatma Gandhi. And it was the Socialist Government's offer of a Round Table Conference which the Congress boycotted. Had the Congressmen patiently in Committee or Conference, and those who were not on it and had no faith in it impatiently on the public platform, done their country's work, the forces of Mr. Winston Churchill and Sir Henry Peggroft would not have secured the ascendancy that they have today. It was because our leaders relied more upon their war-drums and impressing England through their throbbings here—which the British public are far too distant to hear—that Mr. Churchill and his friends had a free field.

Mrs. Brijlal Nehru says :

"We found that we could not compete with the powerful Churchill and Imperialist groups, response to whose call was incomparably greater than to ours. I can never forget the sight of a crowded meeting held at Albert Hall under the auspices of the Empire League which was addressed by Mr. Churchill. With one trumpet call he collected around him thousands of British men and women who all seemed to be thoroughly convinced of the soundness and justice of his cause. My ears are still ringing with the forceful "No" with which these thousands of British men and women answered his question, "Are you prepared to let India go?" We could never dream of ever evoking the same sympathy for our cause."

Nor can I forget the large number of people who came to listen to Mr. Lansbury on India and their enthusiasm for Indian freedom. I do not for a moment

question the accuracy of Mrs. Nehru's statement and impression. But she would have come with the impression in 1934 which I brought with me to India in 1927 had the Congress leaders at the time listened to me instead of Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru who raised the war-cry of independence and severance of connexion with Britain.

Congress can always declare independence. It can always embark on civil disobedience. But if success was its aim, then it should have considered what was the best way to organize success. By boycotting the Round Table Conference it was only handing it over to people in whom the Congress had no confidence. It was only helping the Churchillites who hated the very Round Table Conference and were glad that the men whom it intended to placate did not go there. Implacable themselves, they did not want to meet the implacables from here. And Babu Rajendra Prasad in his Congress Presidential Address had to draw support from Mr. Churchill's description of the special powers of the Viceroy and disapprove of Mr. Henderson's attitude for giving a cold shoulder at the last Labour Conference to an Indian's demand for self-determination. Having disappointed the Socialists when they invited India to a Round Table Conference in which they wanted to make an earnest and sincere effort to solve the Indian problem, they became apathetic and indifferent and did not mind disappointing India in return.

Having missed the opportunity then and finding now that the volunteers refuse to march, being too tired, the Congress has decided to resume its wordy warfare in the Councils. Probably the Nehrus do not believe in the Council-entry programme. Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru is silenced behind the bars. His

wife Mrs. Kamala Nehru is too ill to make a statement. Mrs. Brijlal Nehru—even though the wife of a high official—has made a heroic statement deploring Council-entry:

“I have noticed that recently a number of Congressmen and women are attaching importance to influencing English public opinion with regard to Indian problems. Important members of the Congress Parliamentary Board have declared that the chief object of their entry into the Councils is to show to the world (the most important part of which I believe is England) that the Congress is not dead, but, on the contrary, is sufficiently alive to be able to take the country's battle into the enemy's camp. In a manifesto issued from Delhi by the leaders of the pro-Council-entry party, called the Swaraj Party, before its recognition by the Congress, foreign propaganda was stated to be one of the items in its programme.

“This shows that a radical change has come over the minds of some of the Congress people, whose faith in cultivating British opinion and creating an impression on Britain has once more revived. It is all the more striking because, under Mahatma Gandhi's guidance, the Congress had definitely adopted the view that all propaganda in England should be stopped.....

“If a lakh of men and women, who filled the jails at the call of the Congress, if the financial loss suffered by the Government of India as a result of the Congress boycott of British goods and of the picketing of liquor shops, was not sufficient proof to convince the British people that the National Congress in India was all powerful, how can a partial or even a complete capture of the Legislatures by Congressmen convince

them of its power. If at the height of the movement in the year 1931, at the Second Round Table Conference, Mahatma Gandhi had to assert repeatedly, without carrying conviction, that he and the Congress represented 80 per cent of the people of India, how can a few members in the Legislative Assembly bring that conviction home to the British people ?”

“I, therefore, think that whatever other reasons there might exist for the entry of Congressmen into the Councils, the often repeated argument of demonstrating its strength to the world carries no weight.”

The Nehrus are right in opposing Council-entry if separation from England is actually the uncompromising Congress goal. England feels that she is right in not listening to Indians if they preach separation. The Mahatma, however, did not want separation but only Dominion Home Rule when he signed the Gandhi-Irwin pact. Mr. Andrews* and Miss Slade were working hard in England to get the “ban” on the Mahatma

* Mr. Andrews's speech in England was wired out by Reuter's to India. Congress papers gave prominence on Thursday, 8th November 1934, thus showing their anxiety to get the “ban” as Mr. Andrews put it on Mahatma Gandhi removed. There is no ban on the Mahatma. Even the ban on the Congress has been removed. But the problem is of establishing contact between Gandhi and Government. Reuter's summary of Mr. Andrews's statement is interesting:—London, November 6—Mr. C. F. Andrews, speaking at the Friends House, pleaded for patience in dealing with the youth of India.

He said that the youth problem in India was part of a world problem, but appeared in a severe form among Indian youth educated in a University, who were unable to find employment and were growing restless.

He urged the authorities to recognize the symptom of the disease and not treat youth as criminals. He strongly

removed and establish contact with England. When the Congress supported the Council-entry programme, it was with a view to re-establish the contact which was broken off after the Lahore Congress only to be resumed after a year's suffering only to be broken off again because of the no-rent campaign in the United Provinces. Britain's offer of a Round Table Conference arose from the Swarajist demand in the Assembly. Britain did not withdraw the Conference even though the Congressmen withdrew from the Assembly. In politics it is difficult to produce Round Table Conferences as a magician could produce rabbits from a hat. But Mr. Andrews's and Miss Slade's endeavours and aspirations are natural to round off the Mahatma's sufferings and sacrifices by an agreement with England, especially when the Federal Scheme is not completed and provincial autonomy will begin earlier by resuming their negotiations with His Majesty's Government. The author of negative movements has a positive objective, of which Miss Slade has no doubt.

As Mahatma's trusted disciple Miss Slade is trying both in her interviews and her lectures to show to England that her master stands not for exclusion but inclusion, not for separation from Britain but a settlement. Miss Slade who differs from Mrs. Nehru in regard to

appealed to the authorities to release Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, saying that no single step would create a better impression in India. He also urged the authorities to reconsider their policy regarding detenus.

He expressed the opinion that the authorities ought to remove the ban imposed on Mahatma Gandhi. It was of vital consequence to the welfare of India that the Viceroy and others in authority should be able to consult Mahatma to ascertain the ideas by personal contact. Mr. Andrews announced that he was returning to India in a fortnight's time.—*Reuter*.

the utility of propaganda in England would probably appeal to the masters of His Majesty's Government to renew the old spirit and to resume the old conversation. Though Miss Slade is right and Mrs. Nehru wrong in regard to their judgment of British attitude and our propaganda in Britain, how can a wasted decade be recalled? Mrs. Nehru is right when she sees that Mr. Churchill has captured the platform. Miss Slade is right because strenuous propaganda in England would enable us to capture the rival platform. Meantime the Mahatma has been reviving the memory of an interview which he was said to have given—though he gave no such interview formally—and which created a sensation at the time on his return to India after his labours at the Round Table Conference—when he was on Italian soil three years ago. These three years the Mahatma has been uplifting the untouchables and Sir Samuel Hoare upholding the White Paper in Committees and in Parliament. Sir Samuel Hoare had obviously forgotten all about the interview judging from his reply to the Mahatma's letter in March 1934. In writing to Mahatmaji on April 7, 1934, Sir Samuel Hoare said: "Though the particular incident had practically passed from my mind, I appreciate your desire to place me in possession of the fact. I had already informed Mr. C. F. Andrews that I do not propose myself to send your letter to the press. But I have no objection to your doing whatever you think desirable in regard to it."

The Mahatma's reasons for writing the letter to Sir Samuel Hoare were stated in its first part which may be quoted:

"Dear Sir Samuel,—You will recollect that while I was returning to India in December 1931, you had a cable caused to be sent to me in regard to an interview alleged to have been given by me to a journalist

in Rome and that I had sent a categorical denial. To this there was a counter-denial which I have not seen till recently, being in gaol within less than a week of my landing in Bombay.

After my release from the last imprisonment in August last I was told by Mirabai Slade that an English friend, Prof. Maclean of the Wilson College, Bombay, had thought that although the matter was stale, it was worth while my clearing up, as the denial by the Rome journalist had created a profound impression at the time of its publication and had probably precipitated the Viceregal action against me in 1932. Agreeing with Prof. Maclean I atonce asked Mirabai to write to Miss Agatha Harrison to procure the relevant newspaper cuttings. After much search she was able to get them. The last and the most important I received from her last month in the midst of my hurricane tour was on the anti-untouchability campaign.

It should be noted that these cuttings were for the first time seen by me on their being received from Miss Harrison. I have now read and re-read them several times, and I have no hesitation in saying that annexures A and C are a caricature of what took place."

The Mahatma too would probably have forgotten the episode but he had reminders. When he was released from prison in August, 1933, he was told by Mirabai Slade that an English friend, Professor Maclean of the Wilson College, Bombay, had thought that although the matter was stale, it was worth while his clearing it up. Apparently the Mahatma and his friends have been extremely worried over the unexpected turn events took after the antics of the U. P. Socialists.

The Mahatma therefore exclaimed how he took a lot of trouble to see the relevant cuttings which he had not seen before, as he was conducting "a hurricane tour" which was "in the cause of the anti-untouchability campaign." He further explained—after completely repudiating the interview as a faked up one as he saw no journalist in Italy and the only conversation he had with Italian citizens was in a drawing room "an informal meeting" in which he merely repeated what he had said at the Round Table Conference to His Majesty's Secretary of State for India—that he never said that there was a cessation of the negotiations:

"I am not given to say one thing in public and another in private or to say one thing to one friend and something else to another. I could not have said that there was a definite rupture between the Indian nation and the British Government, for I had said to several friends about the same time that I was determined to strain every nerve to prevent the rupture and to continue the peaceful relations established by the Irwin-Gandhi Pact. Being an optimist I do not believe in a final rupture between human beings.

"I never said that I was returning to India in order to restart the struggle against England. Certain possibilities about which I was questioned at the informal meeting had been so described in annexure 'A' as if I was actually going to bring them about, if I could.

"I would add that the public had neither the original notes supposed to have been made by Signor Gyada nor the latter's own version wherever published. In annexures "A" and "C" they had

only the impressions of the *Times* correspondent about what Signor Gyada wrote or said.

"I do not know how you were affected by annexure 'C'. If your faith in my denial, as contained in annexure 'B', was shaken, perhaps in any case, I should have been acquainted with the rejoinder to my denial as you had kindly brought to my notice the first report. I do not know how you take this letter. If you have any doubt about my *bona fides*, I would like to hear it, if it is at all possible for me to do so."

The purpose of the Mahatma's letter was to remove the misapprehensions and misunderstandings of the past. Meantime General Smuts has been doing propaganda friendly to Gandhi in Great Britain. The General by entering into an agreement with the Indian leader ended the passive resistance movement in South Africa. The agreement did not satisfy the Extremists but as a successful lawyer, the Mahatma believed in compromise. "His faith in compromise still remains unshaken," said Sir Prabha Shankar Pattani to me while we were returning from England by the same

*(Annexure "A" relates to the alleged interview to Signor Gyada of the "Giornale d' Italia.")

Annexure "G" relates to a counter-denial by Signor Gyada of Gandhiji's contradiction which appeared in the *Times* of December 21, 1931.

Annexure "A" professes to be a summary of a long statement said to have been made by Mahatma Gandhi to an Italian journalist.

In Annexure "C" the *Times* correspondent, seeing the Mahatma's denial regarding the alleged interview, makes a halting admission that might be correct, in so far as Signor Gyada did not request any formal interview and no such interview was granted, but insists that the statements attributed to him were substantially correct.

ship. If England reopens negotiations with him—freed from the shackles of Congress leadership and membership—he would like to end his political mission with a compromise which the Extremists dare not repudiate; if they indulge in an attempt at repudiation, that will only reduce them to the position of a minority—that is how Gandhi-ites feel now.

General Smuts emphatically declared himself wholeheartedly in favour of self-government for India at Dundee on the occasion of the conferment on him of the Freedom of the City. He expressed the opinion that the problem was eminently one for the exhibition of that genius for compromise which had always distinguished the people of Britain in their relations with other peoples and in the solution of their own political problems.

"What is happening to-day is not forced; it is inevitable," he said. "*India must have self-government conferred on her.*" General Smuts recalled that a century ago Macaulay introduced into India British ideas of self-government, justice and equal rights which had been germinating. "The most explosive thing in the world is ideas and those seeds of ideas planted by Macaulay produced their crop and you are faced with a situation which must be dealt with."

"Whatever you do in the matter let it be the work and gift of the nation as a whole. It will be a sad day and a sad occasion if self-government in India should become a party question in Britain and should not be treated as a great national issue in which every section of Britons joins."

General Smuts pointed to the great success which had resulted from the great act of British statesmanship in granting self-government to the ex-Boer republic in 1907, when every counsel of worldly

wisdom seemed to point in a different direction. South Africa's position in the British Commonwealth to-day was largely due to this act of faith. "My strong wish is that the precedent followed there should be followed in this case too."

A general welcome was given by the Congress Press to the statement of General Smuts in London wired out to India by Reuter on October 20. One of them wrote:

"General Smuts has come down emphatically and whole-heartedly on the side of those who demand self-government for India. We attach importance to it as the opinion of a statesman of world renown, indicative of the inherent justice of India's claim. All his experience with Indians in his own country have been of the sort more likely to prejudice him against our countrymen than create a favourable impression, though Indians were in no way to be blamed for it. If, in spite of such circumstances, he feels called upon to support the demand of the people of India it is because he fully realizes that on no other basis is a permanent settlement possible between the two countries."

Mahatma Gandhi explained the contemplated resignation of his leadership and membership of the Congress as follows, in an article to the London *Star* of 19th October 1934 :

"The report that I have contemplated severing physical connexion with the Congress is true. It appears to me that there is a vital difference of outlook growing up between many Congressmen and myself.

"I seem to be going in the opposite direction of that which many of the most intelligent Congressmen would gladly and enthusiastically take, were they not

hampered by their unexampled loyalty to me.... Hand-spinning by the Congress intelligentsia has all but disappeared. The general body of them have no faith in it....

"I have welcomed the formation of the Socialist Group. Many of them are respected and self-sacrificing workers. For all this I have fundamental differences with them on the programme published in their authorised pamphlets.

"Last of all, take non-violence. After fourteen years of trial, it still remains only a policy with the majority of Congressmen, whereas with me it is a fundamental creed...it has not yet become an integral part of the lives of Congressmen.

"And if there is uncertainty about non-violence, there must be still more about civil resistance...it has been increasingly difficult for me to carry the reason of fellow-Congressmen with me...despite the fact that they generously voted for them.

"If we were non-violent through and through, our non-violence would have been self-evident. We were not able to show the Terrorist that we had greater faith in non-violence...On the contrary, many of us made them feel that we had the same spirit of violence in our breasts...I have reserved to the last a reference to the growing corruption in our ranks. I have already said enough about it in public. But in spite of all that I have said, the Congress still remains in my estimation the most powerful and the most representative organisation in the country."

The Mahatma has left the Congress. As to whether the Congress has left him, there is a dispute in the non-Congress as well as Congress circles. The Mahatma's position is like that of a man who jumped into a river to catch a blanket which was being carried

away by a strong current. But the blanket caught him instead. It was a bear !

Whether Britain would pursue the Willingdon policy of dealing straight with the bear or resume the Irwin policy of coming to terms with the bear-tamer is for Britain and the bear to decide. Meantime the famous tamer has left the Circus. This has made the heart of his followers melt—Babu Rajendra Prasad wept like a child as he received his Master's resignation !

The trouble that the Independence leader has taken to explain to His Majesty's Minister for India his *bona fides* is the measure of the movement for independence and the actual desire to cut off all connexion with Great Britain. The Mahatma himself would be contented with reviving his pact with Lord Halifax (then Lord Irwin) now a Minister of the Crown of which the Federation is a fundamental. Probably the Mahatma hopes that this letter might clear the ground for his admirers and friends who want to re-establish the contact, which was broken off, before the Federal picture is completed.

The Congress victory in the General Election is a triumph for constitutional methods to attain Swaraj. It is also a defeat of those Hindus who stood against the Communal Award. As for the curtailment of even the White Paper recommendations it has enraged the Moderates to the same extent as Congressmen.

Sir Chimanlal Setalvad on his return from England released for the press his statement anticipating the contents of the Joint Committee Report which may be taken as the straw in the gale indicating the direction in which public feeling blows. In the opinion of this ex-Executive Councillor of the Governor of Bombay who cannot be accused of extremism and whose loyalty

to Britain is *sans doute*:

"The new constitution, falling far short of national aspiration with such glaring defects would surely jar and creak.

"The question is naturally asked, 'What should India do under the circumstances?' It is quite unpractical to suggest that the country should reject the new constitution, if by rejection is meant that nobody should touch or work the new constitution. There is no question that it would be and must be worked however unacceptable it may be, but there are always two methods of working a constitution. One is to work it with goodwill and contentment so as to extract the best result of it and the other method is to work it because it is imposed on you, but to work it in such manner as to show its defects and shortcomings and create situations by which the rate of progress may be forced. It is most undesirable in the interests of both India and England that India should be led by force of circumstances to adopt the second method. It behoves all to see if even now sufficiently strong efforts could not be made to make the British Parliament realize that in the real interests of England herself, she should enact a constitution that will secure the goodwill of India instead of looking to narrow party considerations and interests."

"It should be brought home to English statesmen, who are insisting upon stringent safeguards and restrictions in order to make the constitution fool-proof from their point of view primarily to secure British trade in India, that British trade in India can be preserved only by the goodwill of Indians and not by any statutory provisions and restrictions. The weapon that discontented India will be driven

to use will be to adopt strict Swadeshi and cease buying all foreign goods and as Mr. Baldwin rightly said: 'You cannot compel the people of India to buy British goods at the point of the bayonet.'

In conclusion Sir Chimanlal said :

"It is urgently necessary that all political parties in India should for the moment combine to make clear to the British public the fact that the proposed constitution was not acceptable to all shades of political opinion in the country and to urge the adoption of such changes and amendments as would make India satisfied for some reasonable time with the transfer of power under the new constitution."

The idea of an All-Party Conference is an excellent one if the Congress will join it. The Conference can send a representative deputation to England.

If the Congress does not join the Conference, its Hindu representatives will be asked in England, "whom do you represent?" For the verdict of the non-Muslim electorate at the last election cannot be ignored by non-Congressmen and will not be ignored by Britain.

Already there are indications that Britain will have to proceed more cautiously than before in view of the Hindu electorates' verdict in favour of the Congress.*

*London, Nov. 14—There could be no more ominous prelude to the publication of the report of the Select Committee, says the *Morning Post* in a leading article on Congress victories in the Assembly elections. The journal emphasizes that the Congress programme demand control of those subjects which were reserved by the White Paper, and says that the results indicate what will happen if full responsible Government is accorded to India.

Declaring it is the dawn of a Bania Raj, the *Morning Post* says that, fortunately, the warning has come before a decision is taken and the Government would be mad to disregard it.—*Reuter*.

With the help of the Muslims whom the Congress has not touched, the Government cannot work the reform scheme smoothly. Unless the Congress gives evidence, of working it--and not wrecking it--the future of the Hoare scheme of reforms will follow the past of dyarchy and the Montagu reforms. It will work creakily leading to another agitation and a bigger one than we have known because public opinion has increased alike in extent and in intensity. But so has public opinion in England stiffened up against India in the absence of organized Indian agitation there. While it is perfectly true that every nation is the builder of its own fate, it is also true that a nation which is out to win does not fight only on one front. While the Indian front is undoubtedly more important, the British front cannot be contemptuously treated. To-day Mr. Churchill dominates the British front. The extra-caution of the Parliamentary Joint Select Committee, which in Indian opinion makes it worse than the White Paper, is a triumph for Mr. Churchill's propaganda in England which Indians alone could have resisted by a vigorous counter-propaganda.

His Majesty's Government are not prepared to go against public opinion in England. Nor are the Conservatives going to split their party to oblige the National Congress which has achieved a political *cum* communal victory by routing the co-operating Hindus.

The General Election is approaching. The Conservatives do not want Socialism should repeat in England the success of Congress constitutionalism in India. The point of contact--however desirable--between the Congress and Government, whether of Lord Willingdon, or of Mr. Baldwin and Mr. Macdonald, seems to be more remote than ever. The verdict of the Hindu

electorates all over India is against the White Paper. It is also against economic preferences of a reciprocal kind between England and India. If the leaders of the Congress propose to exploit that verdict for purposes of undoing the Ottawa Agreement and of wrecking the White Paper reforms, if that be their policy within the Legislature, then it is equally certain that they will have to appeal to the country and rely on a whirlwind movement outside. If, on the contrary, they lower the flag still further and unite with other parties or, if they do not want to unite, adopt a statesmanlike line themselves, the transitional stage can be made easy. According to the Joint Parliamentary Committee's recommendations, there must be stages between the next instalment and Responsible Government.

CHAPTER XXXIV

JOINT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE REPORT AND COLONIAL EXPERIENCE.

"Nobody would suggest that we should buy the goodwill of Indians by surrendering the safeguards which we believed necessary for her safety and good government or for the capital which we had invested in India or for the rights of our own countrymen who devoted themselves to her service."—MR. NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN, in a speech at Manchester, on November 21, 1934.

The Chamberlain spirit animates the report of the Joint Committee of Parliament on Indian Constitutional Reforms.

The price that the Committee has paid to purchase the support of Sir Austen Chamberlain is the modification of the White Paper recommendation of direct election to the Federal Assembly. Sir Austen Chamberlain had been right from the beginning opposed to direct elections. He had made his position clear both in the House of Commons and in the proceedings of the Committee.

Direct election has the support of Indian opinion. It was thoroughly advocated by the British India delegation in their joint memorandum. Of both these facts the Joint Committee were fully aware. This system has worked in India for the last twelve years and as the Joint Committee admit "on the whole reasonably well."*

*Para 198—202 Vol I. Para I, *Report* of the Joint Committee.

How then could the Committee turn down the recommendations of the White Paper supported by the Indian public and the British-India delegation? They explain: "We realize the strength of Indian opinion in this matter and we are far from denying that the present system has produced legislators of high quality; but we are now recommending to Parliament the establishment of self-government in India and we regard it as fundamental that the system of election to the Central Legislature should be such as to make the responsibility of a member to those who elect him a real and effective responsibility."* The Joint Committee do not think that this could be secured under a system of direct election.

In a previous paragraph they admit that a close and intimate contact between a representative and his constituency is of the essence of representative Government. Does it not then follow that indirect election between the representative and his constituency interferes with the intimacy of contact making it less real when the latter happens to be one's own Community's representatives in the Provincial Council? Had the electorate been joint, indirect election will be less controversial as the Federal Assembly members would be elected by the members of the Provincial Councils as a whole. Having achieved separate electorates, the Muslims do not support this alteration of the White Paper policy.

The Joint Committee quote a familiar dictum about the relationship between the electors and their representatives: "It ought to be the happiness and glory of a representative to live in the strictest union, the closest correspondence and the most unreserved com-

*Para 200 *Ibid.*

munication with his constituents." How many of the members of the House of Commons enjoy that glory and happiness ?

The Joint Committee observe how 'where a single constituency may be greater in extent than the whole of Wales, a candidate for election could not in any event commend or even present his views to the whole body of electors, even if the means of communication were not as in India, difficult and often non-existent and quite apart from obstacles presented by differences in language and a wide-spread illiteracy.'*

The best remedy for illiteracy is education. The wider and more direct the electorate, the greater the opportunity for education. The way to perpetuate that lack of education is by reversing the system that has worked with success for the last twelve years. The electorates have been as large in size as Wales in the past. The Joint Committee of the Montagu Reforms rejected the recommendations of the Franchise Committee presided over by Lord Southborough which visited India in 1919 and recommended the indirect system. That recommendation would have been justifiable as a beginning. But the then Joint Committee turned it down as it would defeat the purpose of the Reforms. The Lothian Committee, after examining the working of the reforms and the relations between representatives and constituencies, recommended a larger electorate and the system of direct election for the Federal Assembly. The present Joint Committee, dominated as it is by the Conservatives, has rejected the Lothian Committee's recommendation without giving an adequate reason for doing so. Especially when the public awakening has been greater, the Joint Committee ought to have

Para 198, *Ibid.*

been able to give some convincing justification for making the Provincial Legislatures electoral colleges for the Federal Assembly.

The real reason for this change is the introduction of the Federal system in which the representatives of the States who will be nominees of their rulers will in the absence of indirect election come into contact with the representatives directly drawn from large constituencies in British India. To make the contrast between the State and British India representatives less glaring, the Joint Committee have reduced the latter to the position of nominees of their communal brethren in the Provincial Councils. The Joint Committee themselves have refrained from giving this reason probably because they did not want to reduce the enthusiasm for the Federation by directing against it the opposition of those who cry against the introduction of indirect election. There may also have been present in the minds of those who recommended the indirect system that with the coming into existence of representative Councils in the larger States, there will be a closer approximation in point of representation between the members of States and British India in the future Federal Assembly when the rulers of the States themselves would be inclined to transfer their right of nomination to their Councils which as the Provincial Councils in British India will become electoral colleges for the Assembly.

This one essential modification reduces the discrepancy between State and British India representation in the Federal Assembly to a minimum. The Joint Committee Report follows the British policy adopted towards South Africa, beginning with the utmost caution and rapidly leading to increasing confidence

evidenced by the working of the machinery of responsible Government in the transitional stage.

The Joint Parliamentary Committee on Indian Constitutional Reforms are aiming only at gradual self-government. They candidly own that their present scheme of responsible Government at the Centre has all the perfection of an irresponsible Government: "The Governor-General in an irresponsible Centre would have no more and no less power of intervention in the Provinces, either to forestall a constitutional breakdown or to restore the situation after such a breakdown, than he would possess under our recommendations." *

This reminds us of an apposite passage in the Lyttleton Constitution which may be quoted :

"Although not prepared at present to give full self-government to the Colony, they wish to concede the utmost liberty compatible with safety and with the stability of the administration."—(Rt. Hon. Alfred Lyttleton, Secretary of State for the Colonies to Sir Arthur Lawley, Lieutenant-Governor of the Transvaal transmitting Letters Patent, 31st March, 1905).

Three years had passed after the signing of peace between England and South Africa. Mr. Lyttleton's predecessor in his statement in the House of Commons on 7th December, 1900, after the Proclamation of Annexation had declared: "I believe that we can promise that throughout South Africa there shall be

*See *Report of the Joint Committee on Indian constitutional reform* (1933-34) Vol. I, part 1. Para. 40. See also Paras. 38, 40, 165, 166, 188, 190 about special powers and responsibilities of the Governor-General. See also Paras. 168 and 170 dealing with the safeguarding of the financial stability and credit of the Federation, and Paras. 13, 74, 103, —110 and 144 dealing with special powers and responsibilities of the Governor.

equal laws, equal liberty,—not indeed political independence (in the first instance, that must be more restricted in these two Colonies than it is in the Colonies of Cape and Natal) but a liberty and a constitution leading ultimately to self-government which we all desire to see established as soon as possible.”*

This declaration was embodied in letter and spirit in the Terms of Peace of 31st May, 1902. According to Article 7 of the Peace Terms, the Military Administration in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony was “at the earliest possible moment” to be succeeded by Civil Government. This was to be accomplished “as soon as circumstances permit.” And this was a prelude to “representative institutions leading up to self-government.”

Mr. Joseph Chamberlain had explained in the House of Commons on the 29th July, 1902, while dwelling on Crown Colony Government: “This is the first step,”—“only the first step,” he repeated. “We should so on *gradually*,” he proceeded. Then he spoke of the “next advance” which would witness the

*The Joint Committee of Parliament frankly admit the limitations of responsible Government which their scheme would extend to India. “Parliamentary Government,” they say, “as it is understood in the United Kingdom, works by the interaction of four essential factors: the principle of majority rule; the willingness of the minority for the time being to accept the decisions of the majority; the existence of great political parties divided by broad issues of policy, rather than by sectional interests; and finally the existence of a mobile body of political opinion, owing no permanent allegiance to any party and therefore able by its instinctive reaction against extravagant movements on one side or the other to keep the vessel on an even keel. In India none of these factors can be said to exist to-day.”—*Report* (Para 20).

addition of the official element to a non-official element. This non-official element would be nominated. Then would follow the substitution of the elective element for the nominative element. "And after that nothing would separate us, but the circumstances of time, from that full self-government which is, and has always been, our ultimate goal."

The people of Transvaal were not satisfied by the declaration. They thought exactly as the Amritsar Congress thought of the Montagu reforms "inadequate, unsatisfactory and disappointing." The people of Transvaal—like our own people after the Montagu announcement—wanted self-government and not a gradual progress towards it. His Majesty's Government on the contrary felt that time must pass before the memories of bitterness of the last war would cease to sway the public mind. Until the return of complete mutual confidence, His Majesty's Government would not allow to the Colonies complete control of their destinies.

The main reason for the delay of Self-Government was the non-existence in Transvaal of parties without which there can be no Responsible Government which is really Government by party. Would party suit Transvaal inhabited as it was by two races? Would not parties in Transvaal be formed on racial instead of political lines? Was there not the danger of party Government meaning the domination of one race by another? Were not the two distinct races themselves haunted by the memories of the war and the disabilities and agitation that preceded it? Would it not be better to let the two races come together first in a common Legislature and work together in a common Government, leaving it to that wonderful healer—Time—and equal rights and responsibilities to unite them? Was

there not again the complication arising from difference between Dutch and British constitutional experience and traditions ? Was it not true that only the transaction of common business by a common concern could harmonize two different communities with distinctly different outlook ? His Majesty's Government felt the difficulty of fitting an alien people like the Dutch into the British system of "responsible Government" * They decided therefore to adhere to Mr. Chamberlain's declaration and observe the gradualness thereof. Lord Irwin too had qualified his pledge of Dominion Status but it was more definite than Mr. Joseph Chamberlain's in regard to Transvaal. However Mahatma Gandhi with his vast South African experience had governed that declaration by the pact which he and the Viceroy signed, from which there could be no escape if the Parliamentary wing of the Congress were to judge the Joint Committee recommendations. If, however, they are foolish enough to look at them through the Independence glasses, their view would be distorted.

*Similar doubts are entertained about the people of India. "Responsible Government," say the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Indian constitutional reform, "is not an automatic device which can be manufactured to specification. It is not even a machine which will run on a motive power of its own. The student of Government who assumes that British constitutional theory can be applied at will in any country misses the fact that it could not be successfully applied even in Great Britain if it were not modified in a hundred ways by unwritten laws and tacit conventions. It is not unnatural that most of the constitutional schemes propounded by Indians should closely follow the British model, but the successful working of that model postulates the existence of certain conditions..... Experience has shown only too clearly that a technique which the British people have thus painfully developed in the course of many generations is not to be acquired by other communities in the twinkling of an eye; nor when acquired, is it likely to take the same form as in Great Britain but rather to be moulded in its

Independence apart, the recommendations fall short of Dominion self-government. To state how they have to be improved to fulfil the spirit of the Gandhi-Irwin pact would be practical. Transvaal got much less after the Boer War than India is getting after Civil Disobedience may be true but that can be no consolation to the people of India, for they have a higher culture than the Colonials. Culture alone, however, cannot move mountains which the Communal Award has tried to cut a way through, especially when there is a conflict in that culture. This conflict must not make the British Government ignore the fact that the bulk of the country is with the Congress. At the same time the Congress must remember that it has only demonstrated its strength in the non-Mohammedan constituencies which again emphasises the racial line.*

The racial line, however, can be drawn too thick. Were there not racial disorders in Canada ?

course of development by social conditions and national aptitudes." (See Joint Parliamentary Committee Report on Indian constitutional reform. Vol. I, Part I, Para 13).

*"There are no parties, as we understand them, and there is no considerable body of political opinion which can be described as mobile," say the Joint Committee about India. "In their place we are confronted with the age-old antagonism of Hindu and Muhammadan, representatives not only of two religions but of two civilizations; with numerous self-contained and exclusive minorities, all a prey to anxiety for their future and profoundly suspicious of the majority and of one another and with the rigid divisions of caste, itself inconsistent with democratic principle. We lay stress on these facts because in truth they are of the essence of the problem and we should be doing no good service to India by glozing over them. These difficulties must be faced not only by Parliament but by Indians themselves. It is impossible to predict whether, or how soon, a new sense of

One has only to read Lord Durham's report to know the depth of racial antipathy that divided the British and the French in Canada. The working of representative institutions in India—the separate representation of the Hindu and the Muslim races by mutual agreement—entitles India to the grant of full responsible Government. Responsibility is the only nursery of responsibility. As parliamentary responsibility has not existed hitherto owing to the principle of dyarchy, the Governor in the Provinces is endowed with powers which he had not possessed before to check the abuse of powers transferred to Ministers who had not possessed them before. The minorities and other vital interests are not left to the tender mercy of the responsible Government in the Provinces but to the discretion of the Governor.* The one striking provincial citizenship, combined with the growth of parties representing divergent economic and social policies, may prove strong enough to absorb and obliterate the religious and racial cleavages which thus dominate Indian political life." (*Report*, Para 20).

*The question which has troubled the Joint Committee is whether leaders with communal bias are a better judge when religious conflicts arise or the Governor belonging to a race which has observed neutrality in religious matters. "British rule," they say, "has followed a policy of neutrality and non-interference in all matters which touch the religions of India." (*Report*, Para. 18).

The Joint Committee dwell significantly enough in the next para upon the "most vital" problem of "how best to ensure the continuity of the provincial executives in the performance of.....the fundamental functions of Government: the enforcement of law and order and the maintenance of an upright administration.....It is a responsibility which no executive can share with any Legislature.....In the special circumstances of India it is appropriate that this principle of executive independence should be reinforced in the constitution by the conferment of special powers and responsibilities on the Governor as the head of the provincial executive."

feature of the Joint Committee recommendations is the opposition of the popular will (of the Ministers) by unfettered discretion (of the Governor). For this the Hindu-Muslim quarrels at the Round Table Conference are responsible.

As in the case of Transvaal so in India's case, His Majesty's Government are not prepared to take a step attended by risk. After the triumph of the Congress, even those who are not diehards will ask for still more caution which must be the feature of the new Government of India Bill. As the Lyttleton Constitution of 1905 has it, "they (His Majesty's Government) are aware that this Constitution will not satisfy the aspirations expressed recently by a large number of people in the Colony itself. It has, however, been the subject of their most careful deliberation and it represents their final view as to the extent to which it is reasonable to proceed at the present time." *

One can imagine Lord Willingdon and Sir Samuel Hoare corresponding with each other on the same lines after the victory of the Congress in the non-Mohammedan constituencies all over India.

But what of the Muslim votes in the Joint Electorates of Delhi and the Frontier Provinces? Can their verdict be passed over? Here again His Majesty's Government,—not unaware of the existence of Congress-minded Muslims to which the Red Shirt movement bore a glowing testimony—will apparently be guided, unless the Joint Committee's recommendations are abandoned by pressure of public opinion

*See parl pap. Cd. 2400, pp. 1—6. Rt. Hon. Alfred Lyttleton, Secretary of State for the Colonies to Sir Arthur Lawley, Lieutenant-Governor of the Transvaal transmitting Letters Patent 31st March 1905.

which seems wholly unlikely to assert itself owing to past defeats and lost opportunities which need not be repeated, by the precedent of Transvaal:—

“His Majesty’s Government trust that those of British origin in the Transvaal who, with honest conviction, have advocated the immediate concession of full responsible Government will recognize the soundness and cogency of the reasons, both in their own interests and in those of the Empire, for proceeding more cautiously and slowly, and that under a political system which admittedly has its difficulties they will, notwithstanding a temporary disappointment, do their best to promote the welfare of the country and the smooth working of its institutions.”

The Colonial Secretary understood and was prepared for the hostility of the Dutch in Transvaal, though the Boer War had ended three years before, as Lord Willingdon and Sir Samuel Hoare were prepared when they did not extend the life of the last Assembly to meet the Congress forces in the Legislatures if not their demands both in and outside. Who can say that Lord Willingdon and Sir Samuel Hoare have not exchanged correspondence on the lines of Alfred Lyttleton’s Letters Patent to Sir Arthur Lawley:

“The inhabitants of Dutch origin have recently witnessed, after their gallant struggle against superior power, the fall of the Republic founded by the valour and sufferings of their ancestors, and cannot be expected until time has done more to heal the wound, to entertain the most cordial feelings towards the Government of the Transvaal. But from them also, as from a people of practical genius, who have learned by long experience to make the best of circumstances, His Majesty’s Government expect co-operation, in the task of making their race, no longer in isolateid

independence, a strong pillar in the fabric of a world-wide Empire. That this should be the result, and that a complete reconciliation between men of two great and kindred races should, under the leading of Divine Providence, speedily come to pass, is the ardent desire of His Majesty the King and of His Majesty's Government."*

Substitute in the above the words "votaries of the civil disobedience movement" for "the inhabitants of Dutch origin:" Substitute the words "the Congress" for "the Republic;" "India" for "the Transvaal." And with slight verbal alterations, one gets the similarity between the Indian picture and the South African picture.†

Long after the defeat of the Boers in the war came the inauguration of a constitution. Mr. J. X. Merriman, (as Mahatma Gandhi will remember), the Premier of the Cape Colony, in introducing the Draft South African Act, on 31st March 1909, in the House of Assembly said a lot about the difficulties attending a federation and the framing of a constitution. The Imperial Government's attitude was, "Agree to something yourselves first before we agree to anything." These things were prejudicial to South Africa. Mr.

*Arthur Percival Newton, Rhodes Professor of Imperial History, has edited in two volumes "Select Documents relating to Unification of South Africa." (Longmans, Green & Co., London).

For the history and growth of the Union movement see Lord Selborne's memorandum and the speeches of the Secretary of State, the Earl of Crewe.

†The Joint Committee do not seem to think that there is an early likelihood of a settlement with the Congress. They write, "It must not be forgotten that there is a section of opinion in India with whom the prospect of agreement appears to be remote."—(*Report*, Para 42).

Merriman saw the great danger there was in being separate communities in South Africa and if they were not going to have closer union, they were going on separate roads which would lead them further and further apart, which in the interests of the European races of that country would be disastrous and a most unfortunate thing.*

We have not the problem of two races alone in India but also two Indias. "The ever-increasing strain"† to which the two Indias are put, in their economic development made them realize the need for a common government without which they could not settle the Customs tariff and Railway arrangements. The Round Table Conference brought the two Indias together. Finance and Railways among other matters came up for careful consideration.

There were those in South Africa who wanted to move amendments to the Constitution. It was capable of improvement. Constitutions based on compromise

*See speech of Mr. J. X. Merriman, Premier of Cape Colony in the House of Assembly, in introducing the Draft South Africa Act, 31st March 1909.

†The existing arrangements under which economic policies vitally affecting the interests of India as a whole have to be formulated and carried out are being daily put to an ever-increasing strain, as the economic life of India develops. For instance, any imposition of internal indirect taxation in British India involves, with few exceptions, the conclusion of agreements with a number of States for concurrent taxation within their frontiers or, in default of such agreement, the establishment of some system of internal customs duties—an impossible alternative, even if it were not precluded by the terms of the Crown's treaties with some States. Worse than this, India may be said to lack a general customs system uniformly applied throughout the sub-Continent. (*Report*, Para 31).

between two sets of circumstances, institutions and systems can theoretically be perfected by amendments. The attitude of Mr. Merriman, who himself had held academic views which one could quote against his own speech recommending the Draft Act to the Cape Assembly, may be described in his own words: "I knew that it was possible for many clever persons to sit down and pull the whole thing to pieces. They do not know, however, the difficulties that we had to face, and the difficulties the States had to face in arriving at the conclusion."

There is no lack of Congressmen who want to reopen the constitution. So were the Colonial critics inclined. But the leaders thought that a new national convention could not produce better results. The Premier told the Cape Assembly: "If another federal convention is attempted, its members will be more discordant and will agree on no general plan. The constitution is the best that can be attained at this time. The constitution or *disunion* [substitute *disobedience* in India's present case] is before us to choose. If the constitution is our choice the constitution is open for amendments and they may be adopted in a peaceable manner without tumult or disorder."

And then the Premier strongly discountenanced the moving of amendments lest it should lead to reprisals and disruption of the whole scheme. He continued:

"These words we ought to keep before us. I would like to take leave to urge—and I think it is my duty to urge—the grave danger of moving amendments that might tear the whole frame-work to pieces and which will undoubtedly lead to the disruption of the whole scheme as far as it has gone

My fellow-Prime Ministers have urged me to make their task as easy as possible."

Thus South African leadership—though sadly aware of the inadequacy and the disappointing character of the new Constitution—was for making things easy but extremist opinion which was opposed to the Constitution, had found expression. The leaders who were themselves extremists during the war firmly discounted extremism. For instance, a violent speech was made by General Beyers at a meeting at Pietersburg convened for the purpose of establishing branches of "Het Volk" in February 1905. "Het Volk's" object was to make South Africa—minus the natives—a self-governing country for the White Man. General Beyers had the sympathy of the leaders in his criticism of the conditions of the natives of South Africa which was made worse by the importation of the Chinese. But he advised the people whom he addressed to accept nothing less than Responsible Government so that the country might be restored to a state of prosperity. "If things continued as they were now, some people, British as well as Boers, would have to steal to put bread in their families' mouths, and the consequence would be that they would act like that man Bezuidenhout, who threw himself down behind a big stone, and used his rifle to defend himself. (Cheers)."

"This was in reference," explains Professor Newton in a foot-note, "to the incident that formed the origin of the Slachter's Nek Rebellion in 1815-16. Frederick Bezuidenhout defied the Judges of the Circuit Court, at Graaf-Reinet, in 1815, and was shot in the

*"The Unification of South Africa." By A. P. Newton. P. 2, Vol. II.

act of resisting the under-sheriff, who had been sent to apprehend him."

General Beyers was preaching resistance of the constitution. "You know what it is, burghers, when men are desperate. It will lead to another war in South Africa if the Government does not treat us more fairly....." He compared the Government to a huge boulder rolling down the steep incline gaining speed in its descent wishing to stop its downward movement by the offer of a concession in the shape of *Representative* Government. What the General who had fought in the Boer War wanted was *Responsible* Government. His speech was "punctuated with cheers," "appreciated by most of those present," "passionately delivered and enthusiastically received." But the more enlightened Boers did not approve of the tone of the speech. Resolutions were adopted demanding Responsible Government and an equal grant to the Orange River Colony. But the effect at Pretoria of the rash speech of General Beyers, a member of the head Committee of the Boer party "Het Volk" was one of "surprise" for the British and "utmost consternation" for the Boer party*. What impression would that speech create in England, the reference to a second "Slachter's Nek" and the threat of another war? That was the feeling that was uppermost in the minds of the veterans. They considered the speech as "unwarrantable." They were "sure," both British and Boer leaders, that it would create "a very bad impression in England."

Mahatma Gandhi, with his rich South African experience—he was there in these stirring times—would not adopt the same attitude, during the Truce,

**Ibid.*

when the bugle of class war was blown in the United Provinces, as General Botha adopted.*

The Extremist speakers were immediately disclaimed by the Boer leader of South Africa and the Boer press which was behind War as firmly as behind Peace. The Congress press in India supported the U. P. outbreak during Truce. The minor Congress leaders backed it, justified it, explained it. But all of them would have obeyed Gandhi as Botha was obeyed in South Africa. Both held the same position in their respective countries. The Mahatma was actually on trial in British eye. They did not mind the U. P. outbreak. They were glad in their hearts that there were Beyers and Burges in India as in South Africa. The diehards prayed that Gandhi would not act like Botha, because in that case the Gandhi-Irwin pact would have to be accepted. When class war broke out in the U. P. Gandhi wanted an enquiry into the violation of Truce. Government had no doubt on that point.

Had the policy of General Botha been followed, at the most there might have been a revolt against Gandhi by a section of U. P., Congressmen who would have been temporarily locked up, but the White Flag of

*Mr. Hans Burger, (see Professor Newton's *The Unification of South Africa*, page 4) at a meeting held by General Louis Botha at Krugersdorp expressed publicly that what he wanted was neither representative nor responsible Government but independence, not British flag but the South African flag. (During the Gandhi-Irwin pact Truce talks of independence were freely indulged in by the no-rent campaigners in the U. P.) When Mr. Burger spoke out "his honest desire for the establishment of a *United South Africa* under its own flag" General Botha at once interfered and informed Mr. Burger that such a statement should not be made. There is no such man as General Botha in India to repudiate the extremists with authority, say, the British who are opposed to Responsible Government.

Truce would have still floated over the land and the Joint Committee Report would have had to accept the spirit of the Gandhi-Irwin pact. By repudiating the Extremists who talked of resuming war or war-like methods, the Boer leader, General Botha, secured Responsible Government for South Africa.*

There was the same soul-sickness in South Africa after the Boer War as in India after continued suffering for the benefit of soul-force climaxing in Council-entry which the courageous mother of the Ali Brothers, the late Bi-Amman (peace be on her!) described as a No-changer to the anger of the late Pundit Motilal Nehru (peace be on him!) that the Councilwalas were eating the spittle! The Mahatma blessed the Council-entry programme when he realized that Civil Disobedience was dead for the present. The Congress victory at the polls and the rout of its Hindu opponents—for anti-Congress Muslims still hold the field—only

*The Boer press supported General Botha and not the Extremist General Beyers. Representative and responsible Government parties regarded General Beyers's utterances and threats in a very serious light. Even local leaders of "Het Volk" were indignant that one of their number should have gone to the length of making threatening remarks. One of the leaders condemned General Beyers as talking "rot." In the U. P. from talk they had gone to deeds. The Mahatma asked for an enquiry. General Botha would not act in the same way. He wanted to create confidence in Britain that he could be trusted to keep responsible Government under British flag going, instead of using it to break off from Britain. His repudiation of the Extremists involved the danger of a split but it was the duty of a leader to lead and General Botha felt he should lead in spite of Extremist challenge. The result was extremism collapsed. General Beyers was plainly made to understand that "all the other leaders would absolutely dissociate themselves from him" and hurry him "back to obscurity as fast as he became a prominent leader during the late war." *Ibid*, page 5.

indicated that the country preferred constitutional agitation for Swaraj to no-tax or no-rent or civil disobedience campaign.

If the Mahatma could silence the No-changers in the Congress into obedience for purposes of Council-entry, could he not have likewise silenced the spit-fires and fire-brands who disturbed the Truce giving an excuse—from the pro-Congress point of view—for Lord Willingdon to strike a reeling blow? Was not the incorporation of the Gandhi-Irwin pact in the new Constitution a much bigger thing than the capture of a dying Assembly—the last of its kind—through a defunct electorate whose epitaph has been written by the Joint Parliamentary Committee?*

The rebels of yesterday are ready to deliver panegyrics tomorrow upon an *agreed* Constitution—whenever that agreement takes place. And the signatures at the end of it will be of those men who have attempted the overthrow of constituted authority and suffered imprisonment, banishment or worse. And that Constitution when it is finally drawn up—may be a decade hence—will follow the lines of the now-famous pact in which Mahatma Irwin peered into the soul of real India of which the political saint of Gujerat seemed to him the nearest living embodiment. The well-laid plans of the Hindu and Christian Mahatmas were upset by circumstances which both of

*“We have chosen the system of indirect election by the Provincial Legislatures,” observe the Joint Committee, “because we think that it is the arrangement which will give the most practical system at the outset of the Federation.” (See Para. 202 of the *Report*).

“We have come to the conclusion, notwithstanding the theoretical objections which can be urged against it, that there is no alternative to the adoption of some form of indirect election.” (Para 200 of the *Report*.)

them could not control. When those plans begin to work, a future historian will write of Indo-British settlement as the Hon. R. H. Briand has written of the conclusion of the South African politics which have always been kaleidoscopic like the Indian :

“What would President Kruger have said in 1899 if he had been told that in less than seven years after the complete destruction of the Republics and their annexation to the British Empire, a Constitution embodying all that the Witlanders had struggled for would have been enthusiastically accepted by all parties and races in South Africa? Would he have believed his eyes had he seen appended to that document, side by side, the names of Dr. Jameson who raided the independent Republic of the Transvaal in order to overthrow its Government, and General Botha, who then a leading citizen of that Republic, is said to have demanded that Dr. Jameson should be shot as a free-booter; of Sir Percy Fitzpatrick, the author of a violent attack on Krugerism and Mr. Abraham Fischer, who in his capacity as interpreter of the Bloemfontein Conference of 1898 between President Kruger and Lord Milner, is credited with having been by no means the least important factor in that drama; of Sir George Farrar who, as one of the leading reformers on the Rand, was, in company with Lionel Phillips, Frank Rhodes and Hayes Hammond, condemned to death by Mr. Gregorowski, then a Judge of the Republic, now a barrister and a member of the Transvaal Parliament, and Mr. Steyn, then President of a Republic on close terms of alliance with the Government to which the reformers had been so utterly hostile; of Dr. Smartt, the ardent supporter of the British cause in the Cape Colony and Mr. Merriman and Mr. Sauer, who were bitter opponents of that policy, and who have never ceased since to ex-

press their detestation of Lord Milner and all his works ; of General Smuts and of Mr. Hull, now Ministers of the Crown in the same Government, the one a leading member of Kruger's Government at the outbreak of the war, the other one of the prominent of the reformers. But, strange though so sudden a reconciliation of such diverse elements appears on the surface to those who know South Africa, it is a natural outcome of her history. In no country is the growth of a common nationality more certain, and the creation of one controlling Government more imperative. The country, vast as it is in area, is destined by nature to be one. Its physical characteristics are uniform, and there are natural barriers between one part and another....with modern facilities of communication all this made political union in some form or other, and either sooner or later, inevitable."*

The Joint Parliamentary Committee on Indian Constitutional Reforms are willing to face the facts of growing Indian unity which the Simon Commission was not prepared to do. The Simon Commission counted probably on the nervousness of the Princes. The Commission dared not recommend a Federation forthwith which the Joint Committee have with a better knowledge of things, a clearer grasp of the situation and a fuller realization of the demand of the future done. The Simon Commission would cherish a Federation of Indian States and Provinces as a far-off ideal to realize which they would begin with a consultative Council of Greater India, not a legislative body like the Federal Assembly which the Joint Committee have commended. The Simon Commission was frankly

*"The Union of South Africa." By Hon. R. H. Briand
Pages 5 to 9.

reactionary in this respect. It denied to India responsibility at the Centre. What was worse, it denied the immediate objective of a Federation in which the two Indias could come together.

The Joint Committee tries to explain away the Simon Commission's failure in a rather clever paragraph*. "The Commission," say the Joint Committee, "did not anticipate that the Princes would be willing to enter an All-India Federation without some preliminary experience of joint deliberation on matters of common concern, and no doubt the Commission saw in this procedure the means of overcoming, by a process of trial and error, the difficulties of establishing an All-India Federation."

"The main difficulties," the Joint Committee go on to state, "are two—that the Indian States are wholly different in status and character from the Provinces of British India and that they are not prepared to federate on the same terms as it is proposed to apply to the Provinces."

This peculiar position did not arise in the Colonies. The Indian States possess sovereignty in various degrees. They cannot therefore be compelled to enter the Federation. They can keep out of it if they choose. If they accede to a Federation, the representatives of the States will continue to owe allegiance to their rulers unlike the representatives of the Provinces. The Federal Government cannot exercise over the States the same powers which it can exercise over the Provinces. The Political Department will still be the connecting link between the Indian States and that undefinable power called Paramountcy. That Department will not be

*Para 29. Report of the Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform. Vol. I. Part I.

responsible to the Federal Government but to the Viceroy and Governor-General.

The Governor-General and Viceroy represent the Crown in India. The Crown has jurisdiction not only over the British Indian but also the State territories. The rights, authority and jurisdiction of the Crown are at present exercised by the Governor-General-in-Council over the Indian States under the general control of the Secretary of State which will henceforward be exercised in their entirety by the Crown alone. The Federal Government cannot have either the authority or the jurisdiction of the Governor-General-in-Council. As Federation involves responsibility, as the Princes will not enter an irresponsible Federation, the Federal Government can exercise authority only in the Federal field. With the establishment of the Federal Government, "the office of Governor-General should" according to the Joint Parliamentary Committee, "be severed from that of the Viceroy."

This difficulty did not arise in the Colonies which acceded to a Federal Government. Owing to the presence of the Princes in India, the relations of their States as the Joint Committee have recommended

*See Para 158 of the Joint Parliamentary Committee Report. Vol. I. Part I. See also Para 10 of White Paper. While the Joint Parliamentary Committee agree with what they conceive to be the principle underlying this proposal, they are not clear that the method employed to give effect to it is entirely appropriate. They agree that "there must be a legal differentiation of functions in the future; and it may well be that His Majesty will be pleased to constitute two separate offices for this purpose." The Joint Committee, however, assume that "the two offices will continue to be held by the same person and this being so," they think, that "the title of Viceroy should attach to him in his double capacity."

"will be exclusively with the Crown." The Federal Government will have no authority to advise the Crown in regard to the States. That right will lie with His Majesty's Government.

The Joint Committee are for cautious advance courageously forward. Caution and courage characterize the Joint Committee's recommendations. Caution from the Indian and courage from the British point of view.

"The necessity for constitutional advance, at least within limits, of the Statutory Commission's report" is regarded as "common ground." The Committee add "a measure of responsibility at the Centre." The phrase is accurate. It is not complete Responsible Government.

During the second reading of the South Africa Bill on 16th August 1909, the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies (Colonel Seely) who proposed the motion: "That the Bill be now read a second time," described in his speech, His Majesty's Government's position by quoting at length these significant words used by Mr. Joseph Chamberlain in the House of Commons shortly after the declaration of Peace:

"At least we may say that we start with a favouring gale; at least we may say that those brave and able men, those gallant soldiers who laid down their arms and loyally accepted King Edward VII as their Sovereign have been showing by everything that they have said since, how true they intend to be to their pledges and promises, and as they have retained their old influence with their followers, we may hope that they will recognize that under their new flag they may find prosperity and a condition of things which will in the end be satisfactory to them. We have no intention, we

have no desire that these Boers, our former foes, should break with all their traditions. We desire that they should preserve all the best characteristics of their race. We hope they will shake hands with us, that they will bury the animosity that has existed and that they will co-operate with us in securing the prosperity of South Africa under a Flag which, whatever may be said of us, has at all events protected differences of race, differences of religion, differences of languages and which will secure for all those who are under it, the peaceful enjoyment of their industry and the blessings of even-handed justice."

How many Congressmen will say 'Amen' to the above utterance? Supposing it was read out at the last Congress and votes were taken, could it have been passed? The Boer War of Independence failed to achieve independence. The British Flag had to be accepted and loyalty to the King sworn. The Congress M. L. As. have declared their loyalty to the King-Emperor of India, his heirs and successors. The electorate has endorsed British connexion. To that extent independence no longer holds the field. "But has the Congress abandoned independence?" is what the British people ask. It is for Congressmen to make it clear to Britain* that they were not bluffing but only bargaining—the Oriental being a bargainer by temperament. Bargain is the salt of business. Politics are nothing but business.

*Miss Slade published her impression on the day following the publication of the Joint Committee Report about the need for propaganda in England and "the desirability of establishing an Indian Publicity Department in London," which she intended to discuss with Mahatma Gandhi and other Indian leaders.

In South Africa General Botha did not play the role of an Extremist and Moderate at the same time. Once he abandoned independence, he gave it up for good. He would not talk of it himself. He would not let his men talk of it. That was how he impressed England of his earnestness.

"How on earth could we expect to gain in the present state of affairs what we could not achieve when we were well-armed," was the feeling in South Africa.* That is also probably the Mahatma's feeling today.†

**Union of South Africa. P. 5.*

†"I haven't read the Joint Parliamentary Committee Report. I hope to be able to read it at an early date but I don't propose to make any public reference to it. Having retired from the Congress, it would ill-become me to pronounce any opinion upon it at the present juncture. My opinion on the White Paper is well-known and I have seen nothing to change it. Beyond this, I may not go," said Mahatma Gandhi when approached for an expression of opinion on the Joint Parliamentary Committee Report.

CONCLUSION.

LORD WILLINGDON AND INDIAN REFORMS.

"India has done her part nobly during the War and deserves to be generously treated".—Lord Willingdon's letter to Mr. Lloyd George (January 22, 1916).

"Our policy must be conceived in a really generous spirit".—Lord Willingdon's letter to the Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. Lloyd George (December 10, 1916).

"These were the first communications I received from any authoritative source in India which definitely indicated that the time had arrived when Great Britain should contemplate an advance on the lines of self-government for the Indian people."—Mr. Lloyd George: *Memoirs*—Vol. IV.

"The changes due to the War left no part of the world intact. There is a wind of Nationalism and freedom running round the world and running strongly in Asia as in any part. People talk of the analogy between India and Ireland. I do not remember any serious rebellion in India in the War, but I remember she sent us men and money."—Rt. Hon. Stanley Baldwin at the Conference of the Central Council of the National Union of the Conservative and Unionist Associations in Great Britain on December 4, 1934.

On reading through the Report of Joint Committee of Parliament, one is reminded of the precious words quoted at the top of this chapter. The spirit that inspired the Montagu Reforms animates the Joint Parliamentary Committee Report so far as an advance towards self-government goes; but there is less of a readiness to run the necessary risk which that Liberal statesman, who was then the Governor of Bombay, advised Mr. Lloyd George, the Prime Minister, to run.

There is too much of caution and too many safeguards owing to the aggressive and anti-British policy pursued by the National Congress. Lord Willingdon himself stands today for a policy of caution, though notwithstanding his age, the spirit of taking risk has not left him. Otherwise he would not have given the Congress an opportunity to capture a large number of seats in the Assembly of which result one could have had no doubt in one's mind when he firmly declined to extend the life of the last Assembly.*

The contrast between the policy which Lord Willingdon, the Governor of Bombay, advised the British Prime Minister to initiate and the new policy adumbrated by the Joint Parliamentary Committee must be attributed to the contrast of circumstances in India between nineteen years ago and now.

*In his speech in the House of Commons on December 10, when he opened the debate on the Joint Committee Report, Sir Samuel Hoare said that he knew that at the recent Assembly elections, the Congress upon a programme of hostility won many seats and many of his Indian friends with whom he worked for the last three or four years had been defeated. They fell in the honourable cause of co-operation and reconciliation. (Cheers.)

These events did not come to him as a surprise. He knew the Congress would win many seats. "It had been the settled policy of the Viceroy and myself for years past to bring the Congress back from the barren field of non-co-operation into the Legislatures and responsible public work." The lesson of the recent elections was that so long as a system continued, under which electoral success was dependent almost exclusively upon attacking the Government, elections in India would almost invariably go the same way.

Sir S. Hoare was aware also that the Congress had passed a resolution hostile to the Reforms. He hoped on second thoughts they would reconsider the position. He would have thought the day of antiquated negation had passed both here and in India and that there were great bodies of opinion in India whose one desire was to avoid further delay and reach, at no distant date, definite decisions.

Lord Willingdon was then struck by the generous response India had made to Britain's appeal during the War to which Mr. Baldwin generously alluded at the Conservative meeting on December 4, 1934. Generosity is hardly a political virtue. Politicians seldom display a sense of gratitude. Lord Willingdon was not acting like a politician but a statesman when he repeatedly wrote to Mr. Lloyd George pressing upon his attention the importance of answering India's generosity with real generosity on the part of Britain. His Excellency urged upon the Prime Minister "to keep in mind this great country after the War is over and not to forget her during the War preoccupied as His Majesty's Government were with the pulverisation of our foe before long." Lord Willingdon wrote with earnestness that India must be remembered even during the preoccupation of the War as she continued and would continue to do her duty by Britain.

"India," repeated the Governor of Bombay to the Prime Minister, "has done her part nobly during the War and deserves to be generously treated. It is such an opportunity for a statesman to bind, I believe for long years, this great people in the bonds of amity and Imperial unity that I hope you may remember this outburst; for the question is one of real Imperial concern."

This generous outburst from that Liberal statesman reached Whitehall in the beginning of 1916. Mr. (now Sir) Austen Chamberlain was the Secretary of State for India. He too had received similar letters from Lord Willingdon. The Presidency Governors freely correspond with the Secretary of State. Mr. Chamberlain was Lord Willingdon's friend. Though Lord Willingdon had probably got no reply from the

Secretary of State, His Excellency had set Mr. Chamberlain's mind thinking.

His Excellency had also written to Lord Curzon and convinced him of the imperative necessity of making a striking declaration on the future of India. Lord Curzon too was naturally reticent as India was not his portfolio.

"I won't go into any details," wrote Lord Willingdon, "but I wish to preface my remarks by saying that I have written to various of our leaders on this and either got no answer or no encouragement."

The then Viceroy had admitted that India was "bled white" which phrase politicians are wont to tear out of its context and misquote in the economic sense—British soldiers having all been sent out of the country, India's calm still continued to be serene. But there was no visible move on the part of Lord Hardinge of the kind which Lord Willingdon had asked of His Majesty's Government, probably because his tenure of Viceroyalty was coming to an end.

Lord Willingdon, it is not unreasonable to presume, wrote also to the Viceroy at the time. What encouragement Lord Willingdon received or failed to receive must remain a mystery until His Excellency or the ex-Viceroy take the public into confidence. Lord Willingdon on his part had begun to agitate for an advance towards self-government.

Lord Chelmsford who succeeded Lord Hardinge began to see eye to eye with Lord Willingdon. Following the precedent of Lord Morley,* it was put to the Viceroy to open the ball. The Governor-General-in-Council agreed unanimously that the Secretary of State should make an announcement in Parliament.

*See Morley's Recollections, Vol. II.

When Mr. Lloyd George became Prime Minister, while congratulating him "warmly," Lord Willingdon had reminded him of India. The warmth must have been particularly welcome as the letter reached Mr. Lloyd George in cold December on Christmas eve when some of the Liberals had left him in the cold and the Liberal Press was angry with him for his overthrow of Mr. Asquith, his friend and leader. Doubly "warm" must have been the letter of the Governor of Bombay, for was he not the popular Whip of the Party in the great days of Liberalism? No wonder Mr. Lloyd George had all these years carefully preserved Lord Willingdon's letter. Thanks to his Welsh imagination, its present publication is opportune. England is attacking today the Indian problem with much the same enthusiasm with which she attacked the problem of War. And a section of Englishmen (it is a pity that the gifted Mr. Churchill who was so enthusiastic about Self-Government for South Africa is in the motley-minded company of Indophobes) are attacking India with the same savagery of words* as they attacked the Germans in devastating deeds of determination.

This congratulatory letter from Lord Willingdon to Mr. Lloyd George while presenting to the Prime Minister the necessity of making us all feel that "we are not allowing the enemy to run rings round us in the way of making up our minds and in our decisions," emphasised equally the importance of India's

*Here is a sample of verbal savagery taken from the *Daily Mail Blue Book of 1934*:—"Must we conclude that the Conservative chiefs have determined to prove to the country that they can scuttle out of India as contemptibly as the most craven of Socialists? If so, they are succeeding admirably. But let them not think, in their complacent folly, that they will escape the Nemesis which lies in wait for traitors to a great trust."

help and the necessity of a substantial return in the shape of making a really good beginning of Responsible Government.

"It is, I know, impossible for you to have much time to consider the future policy of this country, but I do trust that you will call to mind a letter that I wrote to you many months ago suggesting that our policy should be conceived in a really generous spirit; for India has done and is doing and will continue to do her part." Lord Willingdon further urged: "It is, I am certain, a magnificent opportunity for securing the faithful loyalty of India for all time to give her substantial advance and to give it generously. We must run a certain amount of risk in so doing; but I believe the risk should be run and I am confident the result will be satisfactory. Forgive my bothering you, but I wanted to write to you these few lines to wish you God-speed in your great task and to express a hope that politicians will put aside party and support you in your endeavour through thick and thin until you have achieved the great result."

There is more of India in the letter of Lord Willingdon to Mr. Lloyd George than of congratulations. While wishing the Prime Minister success, Lord Willingdon also wanted that he should turn his thoughts to India at the earliest opportunity:

"Can you amid all your preoccupations give a minute to this letter coming from one who is trying to do his bit out here and has after three years got a profound and certain belief in the necessity for a big and generous move in the way of legislation in economic and administrative matters by the Home Government?"

Lord Willingdon was doing more than his bit. He had kept a difficult Presidency like Bombay calm

and collected. Mahatma Gandhi himself who had had conversations with the Governor was not planning Civil Disobedience. He was not taking part even in Mr. Besant's Home Rule campaign. From her he had kept himself strictly aloof. He too was animated by the Willingdon spirit of helping Britain in the War. Believer as he was in Ahimsa, he was preaching to Indians to join the War to help Britain in the crisis. He was creating an atmosphere of co-operation and faith in Great Britain. He would not make England's calamity India's opportunity. The Willingdon spirit had permeated the whole of Bombay Presidency. That Mahatma should have impressed Bombay playing the part of a zealous worker out to find recruits in Gujerat was proof of the triumph of Lord Willingdon. Tilak too called on the people to help Britain in the War. What Bombay did other parts of India also did.

Lord Willingdon was therefore anxious that the members of the British Cabinet should not forget the service that India had rendered in the hour of a great crisis for Britain's own existence and the Empire as a whole. "What the position here wants is courage," wrote Lord Willingdon to Mr. Lloyd George, "and a readiness to take chances. If this is done by some leader after the War is over, it is my conviction that India will prove to be one of the most loyal and productive parts of the Empire."

An advance towards self-government was necessary not only for the satisfaction of India but the good of the Empire. It is this point that Lord Willingdon brought home to the Prime Minister. And for a scheme of self-government to be working when the War was over, it was obvious that a real move should begin as early as possible.

The foundations had to be laid for that move. To lay the foundations the Indian point of view had to be thoroughly understood by His Majesty's Government. Lord Willingdon impressed upon Mr. Lloyd George the Indian point of view in the following words :

"The Indian point of view is : 'You English have educated us. You have brought us to an intense desire to look after ourselves. When you want us you call us fellow-citizens of a Great Empire ; but when it comes to business you give us nothing but 'concessions.' We love our country, we want you to give us a real chance of doing something for it.' The Englishman replies : 'You are not ready for any more. We must have efficiency in our administration and you can't come in and really help us to administer until you can show more character and honesty'."

Lord Willingdon did not share the view of the illiberal Englishman in India who was unwilling to part with power. The Englishman in the Services knew that once a move towards self-government was made the transfer of power from the ruling class of Indian Civil Service to the leaders of the Legislatures was inevitable. Therefore they were opposed to giving opportunities preparing Indians for self-government. They had opposed Lord Ripon when he made a move in the direction of Local Self-Government. The Englishmen in the Services had not moved rapidly enough with the times. "Things move slowly in the East," they say. They had become of the East—Eastern! Lord Willingdon came to India with a fresh mind from England. He did not share the lack of imaginative insight which generally was responsible for the lack of adequate sagacity on the part of phlegmatic Englishmen on the spot who were still incapable of being easily stirred up on the question of Reforms.

"But the Englishman will not realise," wrote Lord Willingdon to Mr. Lloyd George, "that the Indian can't learn unless he is given a chance to do so. Of course it is true that the advance of the Indian means the gradual disappearance of the great Civil Service out here; but that, if the Indians are given a real chance to progress, is inevitable."

This has since become the accepted policy of the Government. Lord Willingdon knew that the disappearance of the Civil Service will be gradual, but it must come some day. If Englishmen were to continue in the Service in future, it would clearly be not as masters but as servants. Therefore the "disappearance" of the Civil Service, as India knew it, was "inevitable."

The words were communicated to the most powerful man in the British Government nineteen years ago. Lord Willingdon was seeing the future with the eye of faith in India and the Empire. Change there must be and that change must come without delay. England was preoccupied with the War. Even in normal times she was preoccupied with her own affairs. Some authoritative pressure from a responsible administrator was required. Lord Willingdon had taken some trusted leaders in Bombay into his confidence. They knew that His Excellency was determined to see to it that India's service during the War would be adequately and promptly recognised.

"India has done her part nobly during the War and deserves to be generously treated. It is such an opportunity for a statesman to bind, I believe for long years, this great people in the bonds of amity and Imperial unity that I hope you may remember this outburst, for the question is one of real Imperial

concern." This pregnant passage is the pivot on which the British conception of Indian Reforms has moved.

Lord Willingdon had set the whole Cabinet thinking. Something had to be done for India after the War. It must be "an advance on the lines of self-government" as it struck the Prime Minister on reading and re-reading Lord Willingdon's letter of January and December, 1916.

India became a subject of discussion in the Cabinet. As now, so then, it was a Coalition Cabinet. Ireland had to suffer for many years because it was made a Party question. Both the Liberal and Conservative Parties were so bitterly divided on the question of Irish Home Rule that Ireland became a subject of exploitation. Irishmen began to feel that the Liberals who were friendly were more interested in flirting with Irish Home Rule than actually granting it. The great Liberal successes at the General Election followed by the long reign of Mr. Asquith in No. 10 Downing Street did not result in the grant of Home Rule to Ireland. Ireland actually became tired of the Liberal Government. It was when the Liberals were in power that Irishmen decided to boycott the British Parliament. Had the Liberals granted Home Rule in time, Mr. Redmond and not the Sinn Fein would have been in power. But the Liberals, though honestly sympathetic, were incapable of delivering the goods. No single Party, however enthusiastic about Indian Home Rule, can actually introduce Home Rule in India. None knew this better than Lord Willingdon. He did not want that India should be turned and twisted as Ireland was in the stream of British party politics.

He wanted, therefore, the Coalition Government to settle the Indian problem.*

Lord Willingdon, while rendering a great service to India, was really saving India for England as Campbell-Bannerman saved South Africa. He knew that a new spirit had come to dwell in India. He was aware how Indians were working under considerable self-restraint during the War. The Home Rule movement was formidable enough when two such personalities like Mrs. Besant and Lokamanya Tilak were combining. They were fortunately laying stress on British connexion. They were also in favour of India helping England in the War. Lord Willingdon knew how with the signing of the Peace, the Congress leaders would light a candle, the blaze of which would become inextinguishable if Britain did not take "definitely" as it struck Mr. Lloyd George, the "indicated" line towards self-government.†

*When that problem was settled by Edwin Montagu, none was more happy than Mr. Winston Churchill. As Secretary of State for the Dominions and Colonies, in a public speech to the Prime Ministers of the British Dominions and to the representatives of India, Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill said: "There was another great part of the Empire represented at that gathering which had not become a Dominion but which moved forward under the Montagu scheme in the work which began with Lord Morley and was continued, towards a great *Dominion Status*" and further, "We owed India that deep debt, and we looked forward confidentially to the days when the Indian Government and people would have assumed fully and completely their *Dominion Status*."

—*Joint Committee Proceedings*. (Vol. I, Part II), Page 256 (Major Atlee's Draft).

†*Life of Lord Curzon*. By Lord Ronaldshay. Vol. III.

Let us see what effect Lord Willingdon's reminder to Mr. Lloyd George, the Prime Minister in December, 1916 and letters to other members of the Cabinet had on His Majesty's Government. Sir (then Mr.) Austen Chamberlain, the Secretary of State for India, came to the conclusion that the time had come to act. Lord Willingdon was becoming impatient. So were the Indian public on the tiptoe of expectation. As the harp responds to the harper's touch, the heart of this great statesman had responded to their partiotic aspirations.

Sir Austen Chamberlain began to think exactly as Lord Willingdon was feeling. He realised in Lord Willingdon's words that here was "a magnificent opportunity for securing the faithful loyalty of India for all time, to give her substantial advance and give it generously." Lord Willingdon had made it more than clear that a nation which lost such an opportunity would lose itself. It was for England to take the tide at the flood. "Let us crown ourselves with rose-buds before they be withered." That was how Sir Austen began to feel when in May 1927 he wrote to his colleagues in the Cabinet that "*upon a right decision at that critical time depended the peace and contentment of India for years and perhaps for generations to come.*"

Lord Curzon, who too was impressed by Lord Willingdon, wrote to the War Cabinet in June: "*We are expected to translate into practice in our own domestic household the sentiments we have so enthusiastically preached.*"

As a result of the Mesopotamia scandal condemned by the Mesopotamia Commission in their Report, Sir Austen Chamberlain resigned his India Secretaryship and seat in the Cabinet in July. The late Edwin Montagu who succeeded Sir Austen enthusiastically

continued the latter's programme and policy in regard to India. Mr. Montagu as a Radical was less trusted by his Conservative colleagues in the Cabinet than Sir Austen. Mr. Montagu therefore submitted Sir Austen's own formula for the consideration of the Cabinet instead of drafting one himself. Sir Austen Chamberlain's formula ran thus :

"His Majesty's Government and the Government of India have in view the gradual development of free institutions in India with a view to ultimate self-government within the Empire."

Lord Curzon suggested this new formula instead :—

"The policy of his Majesty's Government with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire."

Lord Curzon explained in a letter to Sir Austen Chamberlain why he suggested a new formula. "When we came to the constitutional question, I suggested a new formula which seemed to me rather safer and certainly nearer to my own point of view than the words you had originally favoured, namely, self-government."

Lord Ronaldshay throws more light on why Lord Curzon attached more importance to the expression "responsible government" instead of "self-government." His object was to promote parliamentary institutions in India. He meant Britain's setting up a parliamentary system.

Mr. Montagu adopted Lord Curzon's cautious formula. Mr. Montagu's announcement of 1917, which Parliament approved, was really Lord Curzon's. "Indeed the actual words were mine," wrote Lord Curzon to the Viceroy.*

After the historic pronouncement of August 20 1917 in the House of Commons, Mr. Lloyd George, the Prime Minister, sent the late Edwin Montagu, the Secretary of State for India, to enquire into the Indian problem and produce a joint report of the Viceroy and the Secretary of State on which Parliament could base its new Constitution Act.

Montagu, during his visit to India in 1917-18, had kept from day to day a Diary. His main idea in writing it was—not eventual publication—to give the Prime Minister continuous news of how he was progressing in his supremely difficult task. Batches of the Diary were sent to Mr. Lloyd George by each mail.

When England began to think furiously about India lately, Mrs. Montagu's devotion to the memory of her dear husband induced her to give the Diary to the world hoping that it might help to make a little clearer the great part which he had played in shaping Indias' destinies.

The "Diary" of Edwin Montagu is of particular interest in view of Mr. Lloyd George's revelation of how the first inspiration came to him about Indian Reforms from Lord Willingdon. The very first chapter of Montagu's "Diary" opens with his reference to

*See Lord Ronaldshay's *Life of Curzon*, Vol. III, pp. 162-176.

Lord Willingdon who was throughout an enthusiast in India's cause. Montagu had known the Willingdons both socially and politically and admired them. He had seen Lord Willingdon's letters to the Prime Minister. He had also seen the Bombay Governor's correspondence on the subject with his predecessor-in-office. It was to Lord Willingdon that the Secretary of State was eagerly looking forward for assistance in the great and difficult task.

When the ship anchored, Montagu wrote how the usual swarm of small boats arrived, conspicuous among them the Government of Bombay launch containing the Viceroy's Military Secretary and Lord Willingdon's aide-de-camps welcoming him to India. On reaching the Apollo Bunder steps covered with the red carpet "Willingdon, with his Military Secretary, Greenway (son-in-law of Brooking the Victor of Ramadich) the son of Greenway of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, were there to meet me and introduce me to various Civil Servants Judges and police-men. It is a perfect a God-send to me to meet on my arrival an old friend like Freeman* whom I have known politically and socially through the years. I feel that I can talk to him quite frankly and the sight of a friendly face when my spirits are at the lowest and the enormity of my task is most obvious to me, is something that I have got to thank Providence for."

Later on, Montagu records at some length his conversations with Lord Willingdon: "We were both so pleased with ourselves at meeting one another that our conversation on my side was, and I think on his, completely unrestrained. So far as I can gather the

*Lord Willingdon.

policy which he is going to forward is this : *Complete autonomy for the Provinces*; he would even favour their direct control by the Government of India. Complete control of all matters by the Legislative Council, with an enormous elected majority—and no safeguards on the veto of the Governor, which he says he would freely exercise without hesitation because the Hukm is understood traditionally by the Indian and would not be resented."

The Joint Parliamentary Committee Report abounds in Hukm. It puts no safeguards on the the Governor's Hukm. It has increased and intensified the Hukm Policy right through. "Complete autonomy for the Provinces," which Lord Willingdon had advocated nineteen years ago, has come only now aggravated by the heightening and deepening of the Hukm Policy which responsible government based on organised and powerful party system may yet render unnecessary in practice. Probably Lord Willingdon had apprehended that party system in India was of slow growth in the absence of Parliamentary traditions.*

*Like Lord Willingdon, Lord Curzon was thinking of creating Parliamentary traditions in India by setting up a Parliamentary system. Lord Curzon was confirmed in his idea on reading a lecture on the "Problems of Indian Government" by Lord Islington. The lecture was delivered on August 8, 1917, at the request of the Oxford Delegation for the Extension of University Teaching, in which the important expression "Responsible Government" was fully interpreted. The author had sent a copy of the lecture to Lord Curzon a day or two before the latter modified Mr. Montagu's formula.

For further details see *Life of Lord Curzon* by Lord Ronaldshay, Vol. III, pp. 168-169.

The Joint Select Committee believe in Responsible Government and representative institutions for India just as Lord Willingdon believed twenty years ago. The Joint Committee also believe in the Hukm Policy. Eternal Hukm is the price of liberty under the Joint Parliamentary Committee's dispensation.

Probably Lord Willingdon is confirmed in his faith in the Hukm Policy with the Congress sweeping the polls, so far as the Hindus are concerned, in the last Assembly elections. That faith can be shaken only if Congressmen develop a sense of Parliamentary responsibility of which one sees no signs yet. Perhaps Lord Willingdon is wondering whether parties in India are to grow on caste lines as they grew in Madras, during his Governorship or on communal lines. Probably in his opinion the necessity for retaining the Hukm in non-religious and non-communal hands is rendered imperative by the turn things have been taking in India. Today there are two parties in India—the Congress Hindus and the anti-Congress Muslims. Other parties have disappeared at the last election for the Legislative Assembly. And the enforcing of the policy of administration through certification and restoration which is the immediate purpose of the Congress will also mean the free exercise "without hesitation" of the Viceregal Hukm on which there is no safeguard, however disagreeable it must be to a staunch Liberal and constitutionalist like our Viceroy.

What Montagu wrote of Lord Willingdon's view of Responsible Government with Hukm, on November 10, 1917, is equally true in January 1935 of the Joint Parliamentary Committee Report: "This is a strange view from one who believes in representative institu-

tions, for the Hukm Policy is contradictory to Responsible Government." Lord Willingdon will easily admit this. His Excellency will of course say "it is a truism !"

" This is simple constitution-making " added Montagu, " if ever you have had an example of it. You see, he (Lord Willingdon) has been successful because he has sufficient political sagacity to do everything by negotiation. There is not the slightest doubt about his popularity, and in nearly everything the people of his Province would do whatever he liked, so that he builds a constitution for individuals. You have to be sure that your constitution is proof against bad individuals as well as of good instruction for good ones. His scheme would merely frighten the people into refusing him much of the powers he wants transferred to him and I fear make the Indian demand an appeal against his veto."

The Indian will be in a position to demand it if there is an abuse of the veto. At present the extremist policy appears to be to make the veto indispensable. There is an atmosphere of lack of mutual confidence which their aggressive methods have created. Lord Willingdon's address at the Conference of the Inspectors-General of Police announcing the endorsement of Police safeguards in the Joint Committee Report by His Majesty's Government, supplies the clearest proof that suspicions exist in the official circles, which can only be dispelled by the creation, by Indian politicians and parties, of an atmosphere of mutual trust and better understanding. Addressing the Conference the Viceroy said :—

" I feel sure, however, that even a preliminary reading of the Report will have satisfied you that the

Joint Select Committee have considered with the greatest attention every aspect of the problem of the Police under the new Constitution, that they were fully alive to the difficulties of that problem and to the risks involved in the transfer of law and order, that they have examined with meticulous care the proposals of His Majesty's Government contained in the White Paper and have paid full attention to the views which you and other officers of the Indian Police have from time to time put forward for their consideration. To make only one quotation from the Report, they have recognized that it would indeed be disastrous if in any province the Police Force, to whose constancy and discipline in most difficult circumstances India owes a debt not easily to be repaid, were to be sacrificed to the exigencies of a party or to appease the political supporters of a Minister. They have framed their proposals with the purpose of avoiding this risk, and have made special recommendations with the object of maintaining the Inspector-General as the effective head of each Provincial Police Force in all that relates to internal organization and discipline. In this and other vital respects they have strengthened the safeguards for the transfer of law and order and you will have found that they have dealt at length with the problem of terrorism and such important practical questions as the protection of police agents and the co-ordination of intelligence between the Centre and the Provinces.

"I am able, with the authority of the Secretary of State, to give you an assurance that His Majesty's Government cordially accept all the recommendations which the Committee have made in regard to these vital points which I have mentioned and are

determined to secure all provision necessary to implement them in the new Constitution."

Lord Willingdon's speech was adversely criticised in the Extremist press. "Provincial autonomy is to be dominated by Provincial autocracy" was the chorus of disapproval which came from the Congress newspapers. In England too there was a flutter in the diehard dove-cotes. The *Morning Post* which has been conducting a notoriously malicious campaign against Lord Willingdon, because of His Excellency's devotion to the cause of Indian Reforms, was angry. His Excellency having taken the wind from the sails of the diehards, by forestalling them with the approval of the Secretary of State, in time for the Conservative Conference there was no more excuse for them to say that law and order were in danger, peace and tranquillity would be jeopardised and India lost to the Empire. Thus, the Liberal statesman from the Viceregal throne contributed his share for Mr. Baldwin's brilliant triumph on the India policy at the Conference of the Central Council of the National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations on Tuesday December 4, 1934. Lord Willingdon's reassuring address to the Indian Police soon after the recommendations of the Joint Committee Report and before the Conservative Party had its say was obviously planned for the overthrow of the Churchillians.

This was the diehard feeling. But had the diehards not been blinded by passion and prejudice, they would have realized that the Viceroy's object was to see that the new Indian Reforms which had adequate safeguards for Britain to prevent the Extremists from playing their tricks, were not marred by Tory restlessness.

Indian Moderates (not Congress) received the news of the severe defeat of the diehards* with some satisfaction. Henceforward they knew there would be no obstacle in the way of forging ahead with the Reforms.

The defeat of the diehards is generally attributed to the whittling down of the White Paper scheme to placate the Conservative dissentients. To the extent to which the Conservatives have been placated, Indians are dissatisfied. The latter earnestly pray that the scheme should be improved. There are no indications, however, that Parliament will take the responsibility of modifying the Reforms proposals in India's favour. Britain will not go a step beyond the Joint Committee Report. "Thus far and no further" is the motto of His Majesty's Government.

Mr. Baldwin thinks that without the Joint Committee Report, the Indian situation would become dangerous. In Mr. Baldwin's opinion, the way to lose India lies in following the advice of Mr. Churchill on which Lord Salisbury's amendment was based and make India a party question which would become

*The diehard amendment moved by Lord Salisbury was defeated by a large majority on a show of hands and a ballot showed the voting to be 1,102 to 390.

Referring to the changes which the Joint Committee have introduced in the White Paper proposals which are distinctly retrograde from the Indian point of view, Mr. Baldwin said:—

"While my views have been pretty clear throughout, I recognize to the full many Conservatives' anxiety with regard to many subjects. My anxieties have been satisfied now any way, but I am indeed glad that the subjects which most worried you are subjects to which the Select Committee have given a great deal of attention and in all of which they made changes which ought to remove your genuine anxieties to a great extent—the police, pensions and commercial discriminations.

inevitable if the diehards were to have their way. Like Lord Willingdon who nineteen years ago had come to the conclusion that India should be kept out of British party politics, Mr. Baldwin would ask the Conservatives not to forget their Irish experience. The trouble in Ireland, he said, was caused because by the inscrutable decree of Providence Ireland was pitchforked straight into party warfare in Britain. Chaos ensued and the settlement was one which no party, ten or fifteen years earlier, would have regarded as ever possible or desirable.

"We want to avoid that in India," said Mr. Baldwin.

"There is a chance of a settlement and peace, but I tremble to think what would happen if Parliament turned down those proposals and if India was plunged into the electoral field between the Socialists and Conservatives who oppose this plan."

A passage in Mr. Baldwin's speech takes us back to Lord Willingdon's letter to Mr. Lloyd George on January 22 1916. Well might Mr. Baldwin say referring to the constitutional changes suggested by the Joint Committee :—

"We have preached English institutions and democracy to India for a century, we taught her the lesson and she wants us to pay the bill to some extent."

The Joint Committee Report follows exactly the same line which Lord Willingdon had repeatedly urged on the Prime Minister, Mr. Lloyd George, to take. The announcement of August 1917 which followed Lord Willingdon's "outburst" was incorporated in the Preamble to the Act of 1919. In this Preamble

the Joint Committee observe : "Parliament has set out finally and definitely, the ultimate aims of British rule in India. *Subsequent statements of policy have added nothing to the substance of this declaration* and we think it well to quote here in full *as settling once for all*, the attitude of the British Parliament and people towards the political aspirations of which we have spoken :—

"Whereas it is the declared policy of the Parliament to provide for the increasing association of Indians in every branch of Indian administration and for the gradual development of self-governing institutions, with a view to progressive realisation of Responsible Government in British India as an integral part of the Empire :

And whereas progress in giving effect to this policy can only be achieved by successive stages, and it is expedient that substantial steps in this direction should now be taken :

And whereas the true manner of each advance can be determined only by Parliament, upon whom responsibility lies for the welfare and advancement of the Indian peoples :

And whereas the action of Parliament in such matters must be guided by the co-operation received from those on whom new opportunities of service will now be conferred and by the extent to which it is found that confidence can be reposed in their sense of responsibility :

And whereas concurrently with the gradual development of self-governing institutions in the provinces of India, it is expedient to give to those provinces in provincial matters the largest measure of independence of the Government of India, which is compatible with

the due discharge by the latter of its own responsibilities."

His Majesty's Opposition have suggested the incorporation of the Dominion Status pledge of Lord Halifax in the Preamble of the new Constitution Act, but neither the British Parliament nor the National Government would accept the suggestion.

"We consider" observe the Socialist dissentients on the Joint Committee, "that this country is bound to implement this *pledge of honour* and to that end we desire that the new constitution should state beyond all cavil that it is the intention of this country to grant full Dominion *Status* to India within a measurable period of years and that the Constitution itself should contain possibilities of expansion and development which may, without further Act of Parliament, realize this objective."

With the burial of the Gandhi-Irwin pact, which was meant to implement "the pledge of honour," Dominion *Status* too has been given an indecent burial. The Joint Committee take us back to where Lord Willingdon began when he wrote his two famous letters to Mr. Lloyd George whose Government made a declaration beyond which they are not prepared to go. New order changeth yielding place to old and Viceroyalty fulfils itself in many ways.

Lord Willingdon like Lord Dufferin came to the Viceregal throne from that of Ottawa.* The regime of Lord Willingdon's predecessor like Lord Dufferin's, in Lord Curzon's words, "provides the most startling illustration in its history of an upright painstaking and honourable man taking steps or embarking upon

**British Government in India* By Lord Curzon of Kedleston. Vol. II, p. 249.

policies, of whose abstract rectitude he was profoundly convinced but which uniformly succeeded in arousing prolonged and embittered controversy.....He continued for four years with unabated ardour to pour the vintage to which he has been accustomed at home into archaic bottles of Indian tradition and prejudice, and was quite surprised when they burst in his hand."

Lord Ripon who preceded Lord Dufferin as Viceroy came to India with Lord Beaconsfield's fall and Mr. Gladstone's return to power. Lord Ripon repealed the Vernacular Press Act of Lord Lytton and won popular favour. He introduced in Lord Curzon's words, "a great system of local self-government on European lines—an experiment which was certainly premature at the time, but once made could not be withdrawn."*

With the fall of the Conservatives and the return of the Socialists to power, Lord Irwin made the Dominion Status declaration which Lords Birkenhead and Reading and other ex-Secretaries of State and ex-Viceroy's condemned as premature and unwarranted, but once made, generations of Indians until the pledge was honoured would accuse England of having broken it.

"When quite conscious of the explosive nature of the material which he was so rashly handling," wrote Lord Curzon of Lord Ripon, "the Viceroy blundered into the policy generally summarised under the title of Ilbert Bill." Blunder, Lord Curzon might say, but Indians held a different opinion. To Lord Ripon it is the Indian opinion that counted, though he did not foresee the storm of official and non-official European

**British Government in India.* By Lord Curzon of Kedleston, Vol. II, pp. 242 and 243.

opposition it would provoke. The object of the Bill was an admirable one, "to remove from the code at once and completely every judicial disqualification which is based merely on race distinctions." But wrote Lord Curzon: "When in practice this was found to mean that native rural magistrates were in future to say and decide criminal cases in which Englishmen were involved, there burst forth a veritable storm of agitation, racial animosity and personal abuse." Compare Lord Irwin's meeting the Congress boycotters of the Viceregal palace in President Patel's house, thus stooping to conquer, which disgusted some Englishmen and delighted the Congress.

Lord Curzon wrote of Lord Ripon: "The Viceroy was personally insulted in Calcutta. Government House was partially boycotted by the British community. Services were exasperated and estranged and a plot was hatched for kidnapping the Viceroy, hustling him on to a ship and sending him off to the Cape."*

In Lord Irwin's case, however, there was visible loyalty to the Viceroy. Sir James Crerar, who differed from him, loyally declined to assert himself. Sir George Rainy who held that Lord Irwin had unduly encouraged Mr. Patel who created a tempest which swept over the country, was loyal to the Viceroy. Even Sir Lancelot Graham who left the Assembly for the Council of State and who completely differed from Lord Irwin, was loyal to the Viceroy. When he differed, it was with loyal frankness. When Lord Irwin made a farewell speech at the Chelmsford Club Dinner, in which he justified the Swadeshi programme of the Congress and spoke in the old Congress style of Indian aspirations for Dominion Status, the I.C.S. men cheered him as loudly as the Indians. The official and the non-official

**Ibid*, P. 143.

European community had developed discipline. Their tiger spirit of Lord Ripon's days had died. They were no longer feeling like conquerors. They were for early fulfilment of the aim of their conquest by inviting Indians to shoulder the responsibility for self-government.

Of Lord Ripon's policy, Lord Curzon wrote: "While these excesses were greatly to be deplored, there was an obvious lack of prudence in provoking a controversy in so many forms; and it was not the last among the many regrettable results that while the British element in the community were outraged and indignant, the native element was proportionately elated and racial fissures, always lurking below the stately facade of Anglo-Indian Society, were for a time immeasurably widened and deepened."

This is even more true of India when Lord Irwin left these shores. Never was social estrangement so great in Anglo-Indian history notwithstanding I.C.S. loyalty to a Viceroy whose policy and methods were privately disapproved.

"In a subsequent letter to Lord Northbrook, Lord Ripon with characteristic honesty frankly confessed that a great mistake had been made and that he must take his due share of responsibility." Lord Irwin has never admitted that he committed a mistake but he has never denied his responsibility.

"The Bill was only placed," wrote Lord Curzon of the Ilbert Bill "on the Statute Book in a greatly modified form." The Joint Committee Report has not only wrecked Lord Irwin's policy embodied in the Gandhi-Irwin pact, but it has deliberately omitted, notwithstanding Socialist dissentients, any reference to Lord Irwin's pledge of Dominion Status. Nor have they any idea of incorporating it in the Preamble to the Constitution Act.

"If the termination of the Viceroyalty of Lord Ripon," wrote Lord Curzon, "was viewed without regret by the British community, it excited the most fervid and overwhelming demonstration from Indians of all classes, who have ever since canonised him as the foremost saint in their political calendar and still regard him as the real author of that advance towards self-government and nationhood which has in recent times progressed at such a dizzy rate of speed." The Moderates and especially the Round Tablers, who were personally obliged to Lord Irwin, deeply felt when his Viceroyalty terminated. But the Congressmen whom Lord Irwin went a long way to placate even doubted his *bona fides*. "There is no gratitude in politics," Lord Irwin might say and derive satisfaction from his own conscience and from the admiration of the Moderates whom he sent to London to build up India's future. But this admiration has not given Lord Irwin a place anywhere near Lord Ripon on the political calendar though future generations will treat the Gandhi-Irwin Pact as one of the broken pledges and thus hail both Saint Gandhi and Mahatma Irwin as India's Simon-de-Montforts.

Lord Irwin's regime was so disturbing in England that it was decided that his successor should be a man who would command British confidence and should, if necessary, haul down the Gandhi flag which Lord Irwin had permitted the Congress so defiantly to plant on the walls of the fortress. British policy and the principles underlying it, though over half a century divides us from Lord Ripon, continue to be the same. What Lord Curzon has recorded of the purpose behind the appointment of Lord Dufferin as Viceroy is also true of Lord Willingdon's succeeding Lord Halifax.

"It was obviously so desirable that so disturbing a regime as that of Lord Ripon should be succeeded by a period of reconciliation and repose and the Home Government could not have taken a wiser step than when they had recourse to the diplomatic experience and the persuasive personality of Lord Dufferin for the execution of the task. From a comparatively early age that nobleman had been employed in positions of trust which had given him an almost unique knowledge of world politics, not excluding the East.....He had been Governor-General of a great Dominion. There was nothing in the conduct of affairs of the management of men that remained to be taught to this shrewd and versatile man...it will be readily understood that he was an almost predestined instrument not to cut the Gordian knot in India but with cool and agile fingers to unravel its twisted folds.....Although he came out to repair the rents and seams that had been produced in the Indian social and political structure by the somewhat too precipitate actions of his predecessor, he never dissociated himself in the smallest particular from the latter, always expressed the utmost regard and admiration for him and laid down categorically the doctrine of a continuity of administration."

It is to this doctrine of continuity of administration that one would attribute Lord Willingdon's first statement in India of his aspiration of approximating as closely as possible his regime as Governor-General in India to that of a constitutional Governor-General as in Canada. To this continuity of policy must be attributed His Excellency's successful termination of the negotiations with Gandhi which Lord Halifax had begun, resulting in the Mahatma's participation in one of the many Round Table Conferences.

Lord Curzon mentions how Lord Dufferin "took the earliest opportunity offered to him when replying to an address to propound the principles which Lord Ripon had applied and which he proposed to watch, water, prune and train." Lord Willingdon, the Viceroy, enunciated in his first speech at the Chelmsford Club Dinner soon after his arrival in India the same principles of his predecessor. In that speech Lord Willingdon said :

"I venture to hope that all those concerned, when they go over to London in the near future, will hurry on towards the completion of their labours in regard to the constitutional reforms so that my life here may more closely approximate to the four happy years I spent in Canada as a constitutional Governor-General and I may shortly be relieved of many administrative duties."

"Responsible Government," say the Joint Select Committee of Parliament, "postulates conditions which Indians themselves have still to create."*

"In the absence of disciplined political parties," says the Report, "the sense of responsibility may well be of slower growth in the legislatures.....there must be an executive power in each Province which can step in and save the situation before it is too late."†

Not only is the Governor-General but also the Governors are declared by the Joint Committee to have "special responsibility" over the Ministers.‡

The delegation to London during Lord Willingdon's Viceroyalty had acquired an importance which

*Report. Para 115.

†*Ibid.* Para 23.

‡*Ibid.* Paras 165 and 166.

it lacked before, because the Congress had decided to cooperate. Lord Willingdon's hope was unfortunately doomed to be disappointed as the Mahatma was hurried back to India by a breach of the truce in the United Provinces. Had the Mahatma wired for an interview with the Viceroy straight from the ship and seen the Viceroy before seeing the Working Committee of the Congress, the interview would have been granted and the result would have been satisfactory. It is too late to bewail the might-have-been. The Joint Select Committee have treated the only organized Hindu non-official party in India as opposed to Britain and determined to oust her and therefore they have armed the Governor-General with powers, the non-exercise of which alone—and this depends on non-official policy—can approximate the position of the Governor-General of India to that of the Governor-General of Canada.

Lord Willingdon observed in the same speech :

"If I am right in what I have said, then will come nearer, the vision I have always had before me, the ideal for which I have always worked during long years of public service, a great Commonwealth of Nations, consisting of great countries spread all over the world, grown up and developed to the full strength and justly administered by the citizens of each particular country, comprising many different races, colours and creeds, bound together by one common tie of loyalty to our King-Emperor, King George, and by example of their administration, exercising an overpowering influence in securing peace and goodwill among all the nations of the world."

"The plea put forward by the Indian opinion," observe the Joint Committee, "on behalf of India is essentially a plea to be allowed the opportunity of

applying principles and doctrines which England herself has taught; and all the sections of public opinion in this country are agreed that the plea should be admitted.”*

His Excellency concluded his speech prayerfully hoping that the Divine Providence might give all and each, hope and optimism and the true Christian spirit: I use the word Christian in its widest and most catholic sense. His Excellency expressed the hope: “Before my term of office is over, I may be much more nearly a constitutional Governor-General,...and this country ere long may once again be on its way to assured and increasing prosperity.”

“By general admission,” say the Joint Committee, “the time has come for Parliament to share its power with those whom for generations it has sought to train in the art of government; and whatever may be the measure of the power thus to be transferred, we are confident that Parliament in consonance with its own dignity and with the traditions of the British people will make the transfer generously and in no grudging spirit.”†

There was nothing so gushing in this speech as Lord Irwin’s pledge of Dominion Status. The new Viceroy was only repeating that the goal of India was Dominion Home Rule in contradistinction to independence outside the Empire which was the popular slogan of the Congress. But the Diehard Imperialists would not tolerate India cherishing even that legitimate ideal. They were angry with Lord Willingdon so much so that Mr. Bracken, a Conservative M. P.

*See *Report*, Para 33.

†See *Report*, Para 44.

tabled a motion for discussion in the House of Commons. This motion, however, was disapproved by the diehard leaders and never came up for discussion.

The Joint Committee of Parliament have taken pains to convince the diehards that they are not weakening but on the contrary strengthening the Government.

"As our enquiries have proceeded," say the Joint Committee in their Report, "we have been increasingly impressed not by the strength of the Central Government as at present constituted, but by its weakness. It is confronted by a legislature which can be nothing but (in Bagehot's words) 'a debating society adhering to an executive.' The members of that legislature are unrestrained by the knowledge that they themselves may be required to provide an alternative government; their opinions have been uninformed by the experience of power.....criticism offered by the members is mainly destructive...that criticism by the Assembly has constantly influenced the policy of the Government. As a result the prestige of the Central Government has been lowered.....We believe that the Central Government which we recommend will be stronger than the existing Government."*

The Joint Parliamentary Committee's recommendations reveal the extent to which that responsibility will be transferred to the Indian people.

Indian opinion, both Moderate and Extremist, is disappointed. Even before the Report of the Joint Committee saw the light of day, disappointment was anticipated. On the eve of the publication of the Report, the Congress leaders issued a statement instructing the moderates of the Congress to abstain

*See *Report*, Para 41.

from expressing an opinion on a scheme of reforms which they held the country had already rejected.

While opinion in India was expressing itself adversely, His Majesty's Government were feeling that they were honouring a pledge they had given to India and proposed to honour it, however vehement the opposition might be both in India and England.

Two days before the publication of the Report in India, to which the King had alluded in his speech from the Throne at the opening of Parliament, the Prime Minister replying to the debate on the Address reminded the House of Commons, exactly as Lord Willingdon reminded the then Prime Minister, Mr. Lloyd George, nineteen years ago, that "the Indian situation had been steadily maturing on account of the education and political example we had given India. It would be sheer folly and blindness to believe that our relations with India, our policy and pledges would never mature. They had come to maturity now. This moment had been created by Britain's policy as regards India."

The Prime Minister expressed confidence that the result of Parliament's deliberations would be a structure which would take its place among the other great monuments of political wisdom.

Britain is struck with her own "monumental generosity" towards her "large dependency." India, on the contrary, feels that the new Reforms are marked by an excess of caution and distrust. Had the atmosphere been changed with good-will, probably the Joint Parliamentary Committee Report would have been more radical.

This distrust exists not only between Britain and India but also between Britons and Britons and Indians

and Indians. The diehards decided to blast the Government scheme of Indian Reforms at the Centre by exploiting the exaggerated distrust on the part of the Princes of the Federation. Forty responsible members of Parliament had the audacity to incite the Princes to rebel against the Federation, which would be as unjustifiable as the Congress instigating the State subjects. The diehard emissaries were also in India—and that too in summer hoping to wean the Princes from the Federation. Lord Willingdon would give no encouragement to these busy bodies, one of whom fell foul of His Excellency in the House of Commons only to be repudiated by Lord Willingdon by cable and snubbed by Mr. Baldwin on the floor of the House.*

*The great Conservative leader demanded of the diehard mud-slinger an *amende honorable* in these words:—

"I want to refer to a speech made last night (December 12) by Major Courtauld. I regret that speech profoundly and I am quite sure that on reflection Major Courtauld will regret it also. It has been common in journals and private diaries which have been published to give private conversations, but it has not been done in this House since I can remember. I should not allude to that now but for one reason. I am an old intimate friend of Lord Willingdon, who is not here to speak for himself, and he has sent unsolicited and spontaneously a cable which in fairness to Lord Willingdon I must read. I am sure that when Major Courtauld reads this telegram and reflects thereon he will feel that he took a course which was unwise and will be prepared to offer Lord Willingdon the apology which I think is his due.

"Lord Willingdon sent the following cable this morning:—

"I have just seen *Reuter's* account of Major Courtauld's speech in the Commons referring to a private conversation I had with him and Lord Lynton regarding the Princes and Federation. In the first place I resent very much that use should be made of a purely private conversation in a debate in the Commons. I deny absolutely using the words he puts in my mouth."

The Viceroy became a target for India's opponents in England because of his enthusiasm for Federation. The diehards oppose Federation because of its inevitable concomitant, Central responsibility. Sir Samuel Hoare is for Federation because the Princes would become a buffer receiving the shocks of British Indian extremism and absorbing them.

Then Lord Willingdon quotes from *Reuter* a sentence beginning :—' You fellows coming out here.' Lord Willingdon continues :—

" These words are a complete travesty of truth. My attitude towards all the Princes has been all through and will continue to be that my advice to them is that it is in their own advantage to enter the Federation provided they were satisfied the Bill protects their interests. Any suggestion of bribes or corruption on my part is without any foundation whatever and this will be endorsed, I believe, by every Prince."

Finally, continues Lord Willingdon: "Major Courtauld is reported to have said that it was clear a substantial body of Princes led by men of prestige and importance did not accept the Report. I do not know what is his authority for such a statement, since no Prince to my knowledge either speaking for himself or through his Ministers has declared himself in any way whatsoever about the Report which incidentally goes a long way further to meet their demands than the White Paper."

Mr. Baldwin added: "I apologise to the House for reading this telegram, but Lord Willingdon is a very old friend and there is no more honourable man and he has no chance of attending here to reply."

It redounds to the credit of Lord Willingdon that through good report and ill, he stuck to his policy of Indian Reforms. Assailed by the stoutest opponents in India and revilers in England, the Viceroy followed the straight line of duty, according to his best light and watched with satisfaction the fulfilment of his mission in India. In the pursuit of his mission he has impartially estranged both Gandhians and Churchillians.

The diehards would build up the Indian States, altogether apart from British India, as a Himalayan Ulster for all time in the way of Indian independence. They would like to create a bitter and irreconcilable difference between the two Indias.

True Nationalists believe in an immediate Federation as the only organism effectively uniting such vastly different and widely divergent units as the British Indian Provinces and the domains of Indian Chiefs in a Centre allowing adequate elasticity for their autonomous development individually and at the same time the harmonious co-ordination of the whole.

Federation is the only form of Government for a United India. Without Federation, India will continue to remain a geographical expression. True Indian Nationalism seeks Federation, not as a concession to the National weakness, but as the only way in which the Nation can grow. Some Conservatives, who are not diehards, will not rule out Federation for all time but they would first strengthen the Provincial and State units in such a way that each would become powerful in its own self-interest. They would develop the Indian States priding in their individual autocracy, strengthened by their union among themselves into an invincible Ulster, inseparably linked to Britain. Meantime with the experience of autonomy, British India would have progressed in its own way, each Province developing its own militant individuality, contributing to the creation of the development of the unique personality of British India as distinct from the Indian States. Thus two mighty giants will grow side by side—British India and the Indian States,—perfecting their conflicting systems without intervention from each other. Then if the two giants shake hands as friends

in a common Federation. Federation and Central responsibility would be justified.

The diehards will probably give another twenty-five years for each India to develop in its own way and then let them shake fists at each other. For the two Indias, afterwards to come together, will take another of a century. Easily therefore pan-Indian Home Rule can be put off for fifty years. Those who oppose the Federation are only playing in the hands of the Imperialist diehards.

Had there been no Federation, there would have been no United States of America. Alexander Hamilton knew that federalism had its weakness; but saw at the same time that without federalism there would be no union. Federation has its defects and handicaps, involving as it does a division of power but in a country accustomed to the tradition of caste and division of labour, the lack of division would prove a difficulty and danger. Irritation there will undoubtedly exist in the organs of Government, but is the present Government immune from it? The Provincial contributions have proved a fruitful source of friction. The financial adjustment between British India and the Indian States would be even more difficult but experience will lessen the irritation and improve matters for the future.

The greatest factor in favour of a Federation today is the general sentiment created by the Round Table Conference. How long that sentiment would last, none can predict, if the idea of union is defeated or postponed. Without the union of the two Indias there can be no freedom for India.

India suffers today from the fact of her being a continent. And as God and geography have made

her a continent and as Britain had strengthened her continental unity by a common government, the target for a common opposition, the magnet for uncommon attachment, her future is definitely in the crucible of a Federation, into which both autocracy and democracy are destined to be thrown.

He who opposes a Federation, opposes India's fulfilment of her own destiny. The Federation is to be the captain of that destiny.

Federation involves the approximation of the position of the Governor-General to that of a constitutional head.

The double title of Viceroy and Governor-General or Governor-General and Viceroy will continue to be employed. It was employed for the first time by Queen Victoria in the Royal Proclamation of 1858 announcing the assumption of Government by the Crown from the East India Company.

The distinction between Governor-General and Viceroy has hitherto been the difference between the statutory head of the Government of India and the representative of the Sovereign. The title of Viceroy has no statutory sanction being the result entirely of usage and convention. The term Viceroy is not used in Acts both of the British Parliament and the Indian Legislature; it does not occur in the Warrant of Appointment; nor does it appear in the Notification of Appointment in the "London Gazette." In all these the term Governor-General alone is employed. And yet he is always referred to as the Viceroy. As in the past, so in the future, he will continue to be called the Viceroy, (but the appellation will derive a statutory sanction and serve a statutory purpose which the Governor-General as the head of the Federal Govern-

ment cannot encroach upon. Our Governor-General will become as nearly constitutional as the Canadian Governor-General, if Indians follow the Canadian methods of constitutionalism. The object of the Joint Committee is the same as that of Lord Willingdon in seducing those who have wandered away, back to the constitutional track. The purpose of the new Reforms is to create opportunities for Indians to improve the constitution by Convention which alone has made the British Constitution what it is and the King's right of veto practically non-existent through non-usage. Speaking at the Annual Dinner of the European Association, Calcutta, Lord Willingdon said :

"As Governor-General of Canada, many powers were entrusted to me which I never had occasion to use. If all goes well—and I am optimistic enough to hope that it will—there will be few occasions for using them in this country.

"But still they are there in reserve and if the need to bring them into effect should unfortunately arise they will be ready to hand and will be used not merely to prevent any crisis resulting in chaos or anarchy but to prevent any deterioration of the administrative machinery which would facilitate such a crisis.

"During all the years I have lived in this country my constant effort has always been to move India forward until she achieves her great desire to arrive at a complete position of equal partnership within the Empire with the other Dominions under the Crown, for I have always held that the nationals of any country are fully justified in claiming that they should have the control of the administration of their own homeland as soon as they are ready to undertake the full responsibility."

EPILOGUE

"Lost! Lost! Lost!
A gem of countless price
Cut from the living rock
And graved in Paradise."

"Lost! Lost! Lost!
I feel all search in vain
That gem of countless cost
Can ne'er be ours again."

The sorrows of diehards are too deep for tears.
Their groan in the House of Commons is genuine. So
is their moan in the Lords sincere.

The speeches of Mr. Churchill and Lord Salisbury
are sad indeed. They sound like funeral orations. A
great Empire has died. Verily verily, the diehards
are in mourning!

Could not Mr. Baldwin be kind and the Chamberlain blind? Have they no heart to feel for old Salisbury? Does not that grand old Tory speak with earnestness? Who reads his speech and fails to pity his feelings welling up from his inmost heart?

"The feeling of my loss will ne'er be old,
This, which I know, I speak with mind serene."

And who can forget or forgive Mr. Churchill's roars?
His loss of INDIA is full of dread. The thought of that
note is unbearable for this lion-son of a lion-race.

"The shadow of his loss drew like eclipse
Darkening the world."

Why should the diehards not have the right of public mourning? Who says, for the loss of India, the Commons should not go into Committee to mourn? Who said, the grief was the monopoly of a Select Committee upstairs? Mr. Churchill was delighted—there is a silver lining in the clouds—when the Prime Minister would not deny the Mother of Parliaments the rights of wake:

“Men are we, and must grieve when even the shade
Of that which once was great is passed away.”

But is all this grief not premature? Is India really lost or dead to England?

Mr. Churchill sees Britain's glory fall from the firmament to the base earth like a shooting star but Mr. Baldwin is confident. The Mahatma told Lord Halifax when both signed a pact:

“Though his bark cannot be lost
Yet it shall be tempest-tossed.”

The Socialists, however, have no peace of mind. The trouble, they say, has not ended. It has, they wish, only begun: So Mr. Churchill has no cause for overgrief. Here are the consoling words if—a Socialist can console—of old George Lansbury:

“Nay, list to me, and be not overgrieved,
Ye have not been defeated, but the cause
Came fairly to a tie. No shame to thee.”

Sir Samuel Hoare has no use for these benevolent Oppositionists who are apt to be fussy. In his broadcast talk on New Year's Day, he told England and the world how the diehards and the Socialists by shunning one extravagance were running into the contrary extreme. As for the “outburst of criticism” in India, he thinks that it is perfectly natural: “No Indian

public man could afford to be wholly satisfied with any scheme containing any reservations and safeguards." He is full of understanding sympathy for our own "chorus of disapproval." He did not call it a Greek Chorus." Nor did he say that we looked upon every British offer as a "Greek Gift." He was not displeased with the noisy protest of Sir P. Sethna or Sastri refusing to "kiss," as the Rt. Hon. gentleman said publicly, Sir Austen Chamberlain's "baby." In the New Era, Sir Samuel Hoare would rather have Sastris and Sethnas play the role of de Valera in office than Nehrus and Boses! He sees by the glad light and breathes—amidst "thankless labour"—the sweet air of futurity. To this courageous friend of India, the rising hope of true Toryism, the new Constitution, is:

"The evening beam that smiles the clouds away
And tints tomorrow with prophetic ray."

